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The Debate over Coming-into-Being in Greek Philosophy

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In memory of my mother and father

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Introduction

> Therefore, it is right that what is should not be imperfect; for it is not deficient—if it were it would be deficient in everything. The same thing is there to be thought and is why there is thought. For you will not find thinking without what is, in all that has been said. For there neither is nor will be anything else besides what is, since Fate has fettered it to be whole and changeless. Therefore it has been named all the names which mortals have laid down believing them to be true—coming to be and perishing, being and not-being, changing place and altering in bright color.
>
> —Parmenides[1]

There can be no doubt that over time, the academic division of labor has made it possible for us to learn many things that would otherwise be beyond our grasp. When philosophy was first discovered and practiced, however, such a division of labor was not in effect. To the contrary: in the cases of Parmenides and Plato, the contemporary specializations known as epistemology and political theory were anchored together, as a single foundation for thought. It is important to invoke such a perspective, in order for our own thought to reach these objects of investigation.

The work of Parmenides and Plato encompasses a breadth of intellectual ground which is almost too vast to calculate. However, on one issue, these two thinkers and the debate between them were epochal: a debate over the relationship between ordinary opinions, and the substance of philosophy or science (perfect or exact knowledge). Parmenides constructs a science which is premised upon the exclusion of ordinary opinion in matters of evidence and truth of fact; by contrast, Plato, in the formulation of his science, regards the ordinary opinions as the first foundation of facts to be brought into evidence. In other words, as regards the pursuit of the truth and the mighty authority that this must hold, the ordinary opinions can be seen to occupy an almost directly opposed status in the philosophies of Parmenides and Plato.

The major division of opinion between these philosophic giants, for the present purpose, comes to rest upon the issue of coming-into-being, a preoccupation of the Greeks even during the pre-philosophical era.

At the time when Plato began to formulate his own arguments, the landscape of Greek intellectual culture had been hugely shaped by Parmenides. Scholars are effectively unanimous in this point of view. The thrust of Parmenides' argument, however, has not always been traced out in its fullness, especially in its political implications. At the root of Parmenides' argument is his denial that it is possible for true coming-into-being to occur in nature. As scholars have exhaustively studied, Parmenides' argument imposed a problem that all subsequent philosophers had to reckon with, as if it had become the fate of Greek thinkers to labor under a heavy, even almost a Sisyphean burden.

The refutation of coming-into-being that Parmenides advances is equally a refutation of the ordinary opinions, the objects of which are precisely the perishable objects. There is thus established in Parmenides' argument a quite radical disenfranchisement of the ordinary speakers, on matters touching on public truth of fact. Such a relationship has significant political implications.

The philosophers known as pluralists who followed Parmenides, at least in the cases of Empedocles and Anaxagoras, indisputably remain entangled in the powerful argument that the Eleatics had articulated. However, both thinkers can be seen to struggle to attempt to alleviate this harsh division between ordinary opinion and science, by confronting, in imperfect ways, Parmenides' core argument which alleges to disprove the possibility of coming-into-being.

In the case of Plato's Socrates, however, the argument of Parmenides is confronted by its most formidable opponent. In the view to be presented here, Plato's Socrates succeeds in refuting Parmenides' thesis in his famous dialogue *Parmenides*. Part of the refutation that Plato's Socrates enacts in the *Parmenides* expressly seeks to remove the Eleatic prohibition on the evidentiary value of perceptual ways of knowing; and this too, has extraordinary political implications. In the philosophy of Plato's Socrates, philosophy is seen to be rather dependent on the ordinary opinions about the common objects. In fact, in the arguments advanced by Plato's Socrates, philosophy has no special knowledge or evidence of its own, with which it could even pretend to supplant the authority inherent in the common assignment of name to object. We will argue that this is what Socrates' famous profession of ignorance is about. In the context of this study, in the relationship between the ordinary opinions and philosophic knowledge established by Socrates, the common fund of evidence between these two modes of knowledge have a kinship; it becomes, in this context, entirely defensible to begin talking about Plato himself as in decisive respects a proponent of equality—equality among human beings in their access to truth of fact.

Parmenides and Plato, in their respective arguments, have joined together a minimum of two enterprises of knowledge in one setting. For in each case, the attempt to establish the relationship between ordinary opinion and scientific knowledge is an effort to establish a *political* relationship between ordinary opinion and scientific *authority*. The debate over the reality of coming-into-being, in both Parmenides' poem and in Plato's dialogue *Parmenides*, is a part of this battleground.

For Parmenides, the substance of the ordinary opinions is an issue that he regards as a corollary of his more famous argument: that the only true object in nature must be ungenerated, and imperishable. "But changeless within the limits of great bonds it exists without beginning or ceasing, since coming to be and passing away have wandered very far away, and true conviction has thrust them off" (8:26–29). Parmenides, when he advances proofs as to the impossibility of coming-into-being, set the stage for a very extreme disjunction between philosophic authority and ordinary ways of knowing.

In our departments of political philosophy, Plato is almost exclusively studied for the political regime idealized in the *Republic*. In that ideal regime, no one would liken Plato to a democrat. A select group of guardians are cultivated for the authority of governing in the *Republic*, and thus the reputation of Plato that has dominated our scholarship is that of an elitist.

If one considers the role of Plato in the debate over coming-into-being described previously, one can contemplate a very different, and indeed democratic aspect of his philosophy. For Plato fights, tooth and nail, against the most formidable philosophical rivals, to attempt to ensure that the objects of discourse are common. The perishable objects are the only eligible candidates for this role, and it is therefore impossible to have discourse, in Plato's view, if the perishable objects are not accepted as commonly observable and binding facts. In order to preserve the foundations of discourse, therefore, not to mention his own theory of forms, Plato has no alternative but to engage Parmenides' arguments, which he does in the dialogue *Parmenides*.

It is important to make a couple of points here. For the purposes of this work, the relevant epistemological issue is the status of sense perception as knowledge of truth of fact, and the premise upon which this contention rests, in the case of the debate between Parmenides and Plato, is their respective resolution of the problems posed by the inquiry into the reality of coming-into-being.

In the case of Plato, we will examine works from both the early and late periods: from both the *Laches* and the *Euthyphro* on the one hand, as well as from the *Parmenides* and the *Theaetetus*, to establish Plato's position on the status of the ordinary opinions and the scope of their competence and political dignity. We will explain, within the structure of the study, the role of perceptual knowledge in Plato's more exacting science of definition, and the attempt to reach it. It will not be possible, however, to proceed to examine in

any detail Plato's actual science of definition itself at present. For this study, the thesis that needs to be established is the role that the ordinary opinions play in the attempt to formulate a science of definition, from Plato's perspective. This study's scope is not as large as one would like it to be, but it should suffice for the time being to fill out the contrasting portraits of Parmenides and Plato and their respective, politically charged models of knowledge.

In Parmenides' poem, the indictment of sense perception is severe. Parmenides' argument against the reality of coming-into-being is a powerful, indirect means employed to press these charges. "For never shall this be forcibly maintained, that things that are not are, but you must hold back your thought from this way of enquiry, nor let habit, born of much experience, force you down this way, by making you use an aimless eye or an ear and a tongue full of meaningless sound: judge by reason the strife-encompassed refutation spoken by me" (7:2–6). Plato, in the view we shall offer in this study, advances a very much opposed theory of the relationship between opinion and philosophy or science. In the famous *Parmenides*, Plato first of all undertakes to refute Parmenides' argument, and to prove the reality of coming-into-being. One effect of that argument, in Plato's dialogue, is a defense of the evidentiary value of perceptual knowing (*Parmenides* 155de).[2]

One infrequently noticed similarity between Parmenides' argument in fragment 2 and Plato's arguments, is that both occur, in the most crucial particulars, in a dialogical situation. The famous second fragment of Parmenides' poem, where he sets forth the original proof of his singular object, "Being," proceeds with a conversational, proto-engagement with the ordinary opinions. The goddess is expressly speaking to her chosen pupil in this fragment, but the argument is directly applicable to the ordinary speakers and their ways of knowing. The coiled power of the second fragment consists precisely in this encounter between Parmenides' fierce philosophical postulates, and the contrasting premises of ordinary speech. "Come now, and I will tell you (and you must carry my account away with you when you have heard it) the only ways of enquiry that are to be thought of. The one, that it is and that it is impossible for it not to be, is the path of Persuasion (for she attends upon truth); the other, that it is not and that it is needful that it not be, that I declare to you is an altogether indiscernible track: for you could not know what is not—that cannot be done—nor indicate it" (frag. 2).

Parmenides' attempt to establish universally binding "ways of enquiry" must engage with the ordinary opinions, if Parmenides' argument is to have a chance to gain the upper hand in public conversations bearing upon knowledge of truth. For if the unphilosophic public is not made to feel the inadequacy of its powers of knowing due to the arguments made by Parmenides, the Eleatic argument itself would simply have become the eccentric view of a small circle of thinkers. Parmenides, however, has incorporated powerful

rhetorical dimensions into his argument for this very purpose. Parmenides advances an argument which seeks to rule, to command the domain of truth. It is an argument that the public is expected to feel, in decisive ways; and the goddess's instructions to the young pupil provide additional evidence as regards this claim.

Plato's Socrates, and his famous profession of ignorance, also initiates the inquiry into truth in a dialogical or conversational mode with ordinary speakers. In contrast to Parmenides, Plato initiates his inquiries with a question rather than with commands. "I would not have us begin, my friend, with inquiring about the whole of virtue, for that may be more than we can accomplish. . . . Then which of the parts of virtue shall we select? . . . Then, Laches, suppose that we first set about determining the nature of courage. . . . Tell me, if you can, what is courage" (*Laches* 190de).

Politics, one can say, in its bare bones, concerns the method by which an association of people discuss common concerns, and the outcomes of these discussions are the equivalent of effective judgment or policy. The science that Parmenides advances, although it is rarely characterized as a political model, is full of bite and rhetorical fierceness. In a politics governed by Parmenides' science, ordinary opinions would be beggared and frankly voiceless:

> What is there to be said and thought must needs be: for it is there for being, but nothing is not. I bid you ponder that, for this is the first way of enquiry from which I hold you back, but then from that on which mortals wander knowing nothing, two-headed; for helplessness guides the wandering thoughts in their breasts, and they are carried along, deaf and blind at once, dazed, undiscriminating hordes who believe that to be and not to be are the same and not the same, and the path taken by them all is backward turning. (frag. 6)

Plato, to the contrary, subjects philosophy to a bracing humility such that it cannot profess to have access to any starting point for thought different from the one known to unphilosophic speakers, and that all attempts at scientific or irrefutable knowledge must ultimately, significantly rest upon the humble certainties available to all (*Theaetetus* 157d). If Parmenides preserves his teaching for a select few, such as his pupil—Plato always insists (be the interlocutor a slave boy, companion, or gentleman) that he possesses no knowledge of a private nature. To the contrary, Plato's Socrates professes himself to be incapable of producing any knowledge out of himself merely, and insists that he must approach knowledge through discourse which examines the views of others.

Plato's ancient adversaries, and several more contemporary critics, suggest that his Socrates would rather ask questions, instead of having his own views put to the test. This hardly appears to be an accurate assessment of Socrates' method, but for the issue at hand, this claim is scarcely relevant.

Plato's Socrates never questions an interlocutor as someone with his or her own private domain of knowledge: it must be common knowledge that is the subject of the conversation between Socrates and his interlocutors, or else it would be impossible for Socrates to examine the worth of the views that the other holds. The "midwife" metaphor that Plato's Socrates fully articulates in the *Theaetetus* just insists that the philosopher cannot begin his inquiry into truth on any higher or distinct ground from the unphilosophic speakers. This, we will argue, is the true rhetorical function of the famous Socratic profession of ignorance.

Parmenides and Plato both regarded the issue of coming-into-being in nature as an efficient cause of the view that one is compelled to take as regards perception and its trustworthiness among human beings generally. Parmenides famously advanced the argument that coming-into-being is impossible, and that as a consequence, the validity of perception and the objects that it attends to lay outside the perimeters of knowledge of fact and truth. Plato, in his *Parmenides*, in order to defend his own theory of forms, takes up the challenge of Parmenides' arguments—the arguments which deny the reality of coming-into-being—and defeats them. So we will argue.

THE STATUS OF CONTEMPORARY PARMENIDES STUDIES

The dominant interpretations of Parmenides' poem have almost nothing to say about such a political dimension in the Eleatic philosophy. It will therefore be our task to make this case, through the analysis of the major lines of Parmenides interpretations established in the secondary literature. The dominant trends of our scholarship approach Parmenides, for the most part, in one of three ways. He is either regarded as a physicist,[3] as a philosopher of mind,[4] or as a philosopher of language.[5] He is held to be, respectively: the discoverer of the reality of ungenerated and indestructible body; a philosopher who has discovered certain irrevocable laws of thought or logic; or increasingly, as a philosopher who introduced certain theoretical innovations onto the ordinary uses of the name "being" or "to be."

One defect that all of these interpretations have in common is that they do not persuasively account for Parmenides' hostility toward perception and the opinions of ordinary mortals. Both the Milesians who preceded Parmenides, and the pluralist philosophers who came afterward, display a much more amicable attitude toward ordinary opinions. Both the Milesians and the pluralists concede the necessity of some eternal or ungenerated matter—but scorn for ordinary opinions is much less in these theories, when it is even present at all.

Aristotle is not the only ancient thinker who proved that it is possible to have a theory about an eternal matter, which is nevertheless consistent with full faith and credit for generated bodies. Matter in its eternal aspect, as Aristotle argued, could actually be matter in its inferior state; in which view matter married to form, aiming for coming-into-being, is actually a higher state of being. And even if Parmenides simply failed to entertain such a view, this does not explain the harshness with which he evaluates ordinary beliefs. After all, the practical utility in believing in the superior reality of ungenerated matter is hardly self-evident. Furthermore, Parmenides' proofs themselves are actually *preceded* by his indictment of sense perceptions. Parmenides' goddess informs her pupil, in the proem, that the "opinions of mortals" deserve "no true reliance" (frag. 1).

The current scholarship that regards Parmenides' main contribution to philosophy to consist in the discovery of certain immanent laws of logic or thought in human beings, expresses a notable affinity for Parmenides' claim that the ordinary thinkers are helplessly and relentlessly entangled in self-contradictory utterances. Parmenides himself, however, never does do a very good job in proving such self-contradictory utterances on behalf of the unphilosophic multitude:

> What is there to be said and thought must needs be: for it is there for being, but nothing is not. I bid you ponder that, for this is the first way of enquiry from which I hold you back, but then from that on which mortals wander knowing nothing, two-headed; for helplessness guides the thought in their breasts, and they are carried along, deaf and blind at once, dazed, undiscriminating hordes, who believe that to be and not to be are the same and not the same. (frag. 6)

In the very early pages of the *Parmenides*, Plato's Socrates takes direct aim at this postulate of Eleatic doctrine, and expresses his own view that it is no effective criticism at all that Parmenides and Zeno are making (129d).

Parmenides' numerous contemporary admirers do not appear to provide a more powerful defense of Parmenides' accusations than do the Eleatics themselves. Scholars who defend Parmenides' indictment of the ordinary speakers give us examples such as the following. If the ordinary speaker refers to green grass, he thereby refers to something that "is" or has being. To indicate the green grass, however—we are informed—is also to implicitly make statements about "not being." If the grass is said to be green, this line of argument indicates, then it is by logical necessity "not brown," "not yellow," and so forth. Thus, this argument maintains, the ordinary speaker has ineluctably committed himself to making contradictory statements about an object, that it both "is" and "is not."

Silence is the preferred destiny for such opiners when any issue of truth is before the city, Parmenides makes us feel. It is recommended to us that only he or she who can speak without such "contradictions" deserves to escape the

sharp edges of Parmenides' elenchus. More than a few noted scholars appear to be in agreement with this much. "Asked whether the sky *is*, a two-headed mortal is committed to the 'yes and no' answer that it both is (e.g., blue) and is not (e.g., grey). All ordinary human beliefs about change and plurality will on examination turn out to imply the same ambivalence about a thing's being."[6]

According to Charles Kahn, Parmenides arrived at his doctrine of being through a development of the ordinary or natural uses of the name "being." This argument supplies us initially with the unobjectionable observation that ordinary speakers routinely refer to "being" in an "existential sense." An "existential" use of the name being is on display, for example, in the utterance "Socrates exists." One may also easily discern another manner in which ordinary speakers employ the name of being: this second sense wishes to indicate a predicate, and is accordingly a "predicational" use of the name "to be," as in "Socrates is moody."[7]

In Kahn's formulation, Parmenides expanded and innovated from these inherited uses of the name "being" characteristic of commonplace Greek. Parmenides, we are told, took advantage of the natural uses to devise a philosophical use, hitherto allegedly unknown: a use of "being" which means to indicate "what is the case," or "what is the true state of affairs." Kahn refers to this sense of to be as the "veridical" one.[8]

It seems to strain credibility a little to suggest, though, that ordinary speakers do not routinely employ a use of the name "being" to indicate "what is the case" or "what is the true state of affairs." "You are a liar" comes to mind as a simple enough example. All of which is to say that there is no inevitable concomitant of Parmenides' explorations into the doctrine of being, such as would render the discovery of this use of the name "being" somehow an adversary or mutually exclusive phenomenon as regards the uses of the name being in the existential or predicative sense.

As we will attempt to prove, it is a political argument which ultimately drives Parmenides' elenchus: it is a rhetorical tour de force, rather than an encounter with a man, as Gregory Vlastos has indicated, who has unveiled the intellectual properties of a god. "We are here face to face with the central paradox of Parmenides' theory of knowledge. The mortal frame, qua mortal, cannot think being. Yet the 'knowing man can and does.'"[9]

One point that needs to be brought into focus in this examination of Parmenides' argument is the standard it must achieve in order to enjoy success on its own terms. At the very least, Parmenides must succeed in appearing to refute the rationality of the ordinary assignment of name to object; he must do so if he is to be able to claim that his own arguments about the unreality of coming-into-being wish to have any just title to adherence from the public that he seeks to influence and persuade. There is nothing more

characteristic of Parmenides' argument than its determination to persuade, even in a competitive disposition, as the eighth fragment attests to:

> Here I end my trustworthy discourse and thought concerning truth: henceforth learn the mortal beliefs of mortal men, listening to the deceitful ordering of my words. For they made up their minds to name two forms, of which they needs must not name so much as one—that is where they have gone astray—and distinguished them as opposite in appearance and assigned to them signs different from one another—to one the aetherial flame of fire, gentle and very light, in every direction identical with itself, but not with the other; and that other too is in itself just the opposite, dark night, dense in appearance and heavy. The whole ordering of these I tell you as it seems fitting, for so no thought of mortal men will ever outstrip you. (8:50–61)

THE CURRENT STATUS OF PLATO SCHOLARSHIP

The estimation of Parmenides' argument has risen to such high levels in our scholarship, that Plato's very reputation as a thinker has begun to fade into somewhat of a derivative status. Plato, it is held by more than a few influential scholars, could not even have arrived at his theory of forms if he had not had the good fortune to be influenced by Parmenides' doctrine about motionless, eternal "Being." In the view of recent commentators, it is not an exaggeration to suggest that Parmenides is now often portrayed as *the* seminal thinker of classical Greek philosophy.[10] It is increasingly a standard view among commentators, that Plato's Socrates himself is overcome by the power of the Eleatic legacy, which, they say, he willingly embraces.

The most spectacular evidence of this movement in the status of Plato in our scholarship can be seen in the commentary on the dialogue *Parmenides* itself. A large number of scholars are now convinced that in this dialogue, Plato has commissioned the character of Parmenides to deliver a telling, if not a fatal blow against Plato's own theory of forms.[11] We will investigate this matter in some depth in chapter 5; for the moment, it must suffice to indicate the following points. In fact, it is Parmenides' argument which is put to the test in the dialogue that Plato named after the great Eleatic; so far from treating Parmenides with reverence or deference, Plato actually assigns a very humbling role to Parmenides in the dialogue named for him. The role assigned to Parmenides there is nothing other than to utter the effectual refutation of his own entire argument. In the fifth chapter, a case will be made that Plato refutes Parmenides' indictment of the reality of coming-into-being, and so concludes, rather than sustains, the legacy of Parmenides' argument.

We will also be challenged, in this study, to rebut a claim that has by now been very powerfully established in the scholarly literature: this claim is that

Parmenides created a philosophical interpretation of the notion of Being which even Plato's Socrates has in some measure been shaped by, or come to adopt. Plato's theory of forms, as those forms are hypothesized to be eternal and ungenerated, is linked by a number of scholars to the theory of being that Parmenides developed.

This view is confused. In the first place, the forms are originally known to human beings in those very perishable objects which the Eleatics wish to wholly exclude from all evidentiary matters concerning truth of fact. Plato's Socrates, it can be noted, arrived at his famous profession of ignorance precisely as a rhetorical method for summoning forth from interlocutors a base of knowledge which all hold in common: namely recognition of the various forms in perishable bodies.

This common intelligence on display in the ordinary individual's effortless assignment of name to object is certainly not science, in Plato's view; however, the theory of scientific definition which Plato advances does indeed depend on this recognition-knowledge as the ultimate *evidence* for its own investigations. The ordinary and spontaneous ability of unphilosophic human beings to assign name to object is, in Plato's view, itself evidence of a distinct *intelligence* operative in the ordinary opinions. One could hardly formulate a proposition more at loggerheads with the Eleatic philosophy.

That which the memory recognizes in the patterns that recur (and all of the patterns, as Plato argues throughout his work, appear innumerable times in the perishable objects), is not a knowledge that has the power of full consciousness and comprehension such as the power possessed by logos or more deliberate investigation. Yet Plato insists that these opinions are nevertheless the port from which philosophy must embark. When argument finally reaches for an intellectual comprehension in speech—as opposed to an inarticulate recognition of the individual forms—Plato's philosophy will attach a scientific hypothesis to the ordinary views. Yet this hypothesis itself, that the forms exist separately in nature for the sake of intellectual investigation, remains dependent on the common familiarity with the forms as they recur in the common objects. "And in respect of the just and the unjust, the good and the bad, and all the ideas or forms, the same statement holds, that in itself each is one, but that by virtue of their communion with actions and bodies and with one another they present themselves everywhere, each as a multiplicity of aspects" (*Republic* 476a). Yet it is the building block upon which Plato's entire science of definition rests, and he never fails to fight for the integrity of this recognition-knowledge in his major debates with rival philosophers such as Protagoras and Parmenides.

In chapters 4, 5, and 6 we will attempt to demonstrate that Plato labors to defend the validity of the ordinary familiarity with the forms in perception, and that this common variety of knowledge, while far from science, is never-

theless the indispensable foundation for the pursuit of science as such. In the sixth chapter, on the *Theaetetus*, this claim will be advanced in greater detail.

This argument as regards Plato is exposed, among other challenges, to the objection that Plato quite indisputably talks about the forms as lacking the status of complete being insofar as they are mixed up in perishable objects. It is only the forms as isolated absolutes, such as the absolute form of beauty discussed in the *Republic*, where the forms are said to have complete being, and therefore to resemble Parmenides' conception of being.

In this particular context, however, the difference between the forms mixed up in perishable bodies versus the forms considered separately as self-sufficient absolutes is quite clearly a distinction introduced by Plato's own suggested scientific method. The perishable bodies, as Plato never tires of showing, all contain an infinite number of parts. Indeed, the most complete account of such an argument will be on display in our consideration of the dialogue *Parmenides*, chapter 5. In a perishable body, one will indeed find instances of a form as well as of the opposite form. Plato, however, never holds that the opposites themselves blend or mix in the particular perishable objects: to the contrary, he insists that they never mix, the opposite forms don't, in any single perishable object. Yet nevertheless the problem remains, that as parts of a perishable object, a single pattern or form cannot be isolated for the contemplation of intellect. Rather, among the perishable objects, perception or recognition-knowledge is our way of knowing, and it is this way of *knowing*, not the copies of the forms themselves, which are only incompletely existing.

Plato makes it quite clear that it is only by the introduction of a hypothesis, the hypothesis that a form exists by itself and separately for the intellect, that it becomes possible to inquire into the content of the essential definition of that partless form, and this kind of knowledge is science, logos, which is the true project of distinction which Plato proposes to make in his discussion of these two contexts of the forms.

At the core of this investigation into Plato and Parmenides, one may observe that there is not only a massive and irreducible tension between these two philosophical models: it is also clear that this distinction is one heavily freighted with political implications. Parmenides, as indicated previously, supplies us with a model of scientific knowledge which does not rest upon evidence and fact which is available to the ordinary speakers, and which is not contained in the ordinary opinions. By contrast, Plato's Socrates, and his theory of cause, recognize an irrefutable and diamond-hard intelligence *operative* in the substance of the ordinary opinions. In the case of the science that Plato's Socrates presents and develops, expert knowledge is wholly dependent upon the knowledge of fact which is held, in Plato's doctrine, to belong to ordinary opinions, and to in fact be constitutive of what are now commonly referred to as natural languages.

NOTES

1. Fragment 8, lines 32–42. From the translation in G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, and M. Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 252.

2. In Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, eds., *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, trans. Francis M. Cornford (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989).

3. John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy* (New York: Meridian, 1965), 178; Karl Popper, *The World of Parmenides* (London: Routledge, 1998): "Parmenides is a materialist who believes in the power of pure thought. And this has the consequence that in this world, there can be no movement. Nothing ever happens" (69).

4. Leonardo Taran, *Parmenides* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965), 37–38, 96, 117, 130. J. E. Raven, *Pythagoreans and Eleatics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 23. Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), 155, 163. G. E. L. Owen, "Eleatic Questions," in *Logic, Science and Dialectic: Collected Papers in Greek Philosophy*, ed. Martha Nussbaum (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 9, 15–16. Alexander P. D. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides: A Study of Word, Image and Argument in the Fragments* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970), 90. Francis M. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides* (New York: Library of Liberal Arts, 1957), 29, 33.

5. Charles Kahn is foremost in the effort to popularize this view among commentators. "The Greek Verb 'to Be' and the Concept of Being," *Foundations of Language* 2 (1966): 245–46. "The Thesis of Parmenides," *Review of Metaphysics* 22 (1969): 700–701, 705. "Linguistic Relativism and the Greek Project of Ontology," in *The Question of Being: East-West Perspectives*, ed. Mervyn Sprung (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978), 33–35. Cf. Montgomery Furth, "Elements of Eleatic Ontology," In *The Pre-Socratics*, ed. A.P.D. Mourelatos (New York: Anchor, 1974), 242–43, 249. Mourelatos, *Route of Parmenides*, 48–49.

6. David Sedley, "Parmenides and Melissus," in *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy*, ed. A. A. Long (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 15.

7. Cf. Kahn, "Greek Verb 'to Be,'" 246.

8. Kahn, "Greek Verb 'to Be,'" 250–51, 260. Cf. Furth, "Eleatic Ontology," 249.

9. "Parmenides' Theory of Knowledge," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 77 (1946): 71. "Yet in his doctrine of being Parmenides found certitude and security such as no god could surpass" (75). "This kind of thinking could be used against the world of the senses" (76).

10. Charles Kahn, "Being in Parmenides and Plato," *La Parola del Passato* 43 (1988): "If it was the encounter with Socrates that made Plato a philosopher, it was the poem of Parmenides that made him a metaphysician. In the first place it was Parmenides' distinction between being and becoming that provided Plato with an ontological basis for his theory of forms. When he decides to submit this theory to searching criticism, he chose as critic no other than Parmenides himself" (237). Cf. Taran, *Parmenides*, vii; Patricia Curd, *The Legacy of Parmenides: Eleatic Monism and Later Presocratic Thought* (Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2004), 231–32, 238.

11. Gregory Vlastos, "The Third Man Argument in the *Parmenides*," *Philosophical Review* 63 (1954): 329, 342. Kenneth M. Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), 60, 62, 95. Robert Turnbull, *The Parmenides and Plato's Late Philosophy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 19, 23, 39. Kelsey Wood, *Troubling Play: Meaning and Entity in Plato's Parmenides* (Albany: SUNY, 2005), 1–2, 74, 85.

Chapter One

Parmenides' Argument

Parmenides is thought to have composed his famous poem in the late sixth century. At this juncture, we can set forth certain aspects of the poem that most scholars will accept as unobjectionable. First, the poem is broken down into three parts. In the first part, the proem, the narrator tells us the story of a youth who is summoned away from his customary community. A chariot has been dispatched to ferry him away, to carry him into the presence of one goddess, whom Parmenides does not name. When the chariot ride has brought the youth before the goddess, the latter prepares the youth for certain teachings soon to be imparted to him: these teachings are the purpose of the journey, and these teachings contain Parmenides' proofs to the effect that any kind of real change in nature, let alone coming-into-being, can be disproved on logical grounds.

After the proem, when the youth is in the presence of the goddess, this part of the poem is entitled "The Way of Truth" or "Aletheia." In the Aletheia, the youth is taught as much of the goddess's doctrine as she is willing to teach him. The teachings in the "Way of Truth" contain the celebrated refutations of coming-into-being in nature, and it is this teaching which is ultimately the pivotal one for our investigation. In short order, we will proceed to examine those teachings.

We must also pay our respects to a third part of the poem. This third part of the poem is strictly separated from the way of truth, by the goddess's declaration that she has ceased to utter true arguments. The third part of the poem does not concern the doctrine that the goddess has taught to her chosen pupils; rather, the third part of the poem concerns the doctrine that the goddess would have her pupil carry back for public dissemination, when his educational sojourn is complete. The third part of the poem is called the "Way of Seeming"; for our purposes, it is relevant to indicate that the way of

seeming represents a new kind of political authority which the goddess's philosophers aspire to enjoy within and against the demos.

Each of these three parts of Parmenides' poem have received a considerable amount of scrutiny. Doubtless, there are very important things to consider in the proem, and that the proem is indeed a weighty part of this work. However, the proem does not directly bear upon the proofs and arguments which attempt to indict the reality of coming-into-being in nature. It is explained, previously, how Parmenides' indictment of the reality of coming-into-being quietly withdraws authority from the ordinary speakers, insofar as they would be certified and legitimated to testify as to matters of fact and truth. Since this last is the most pressing part of our study, it seems appropriate to omit a further discussion of the proem until some other time and place.

The commentators are certainly in agreement that the goddess wastes little time but almost immediately launches into severe indictments against the validity of the ordinary opinions, opinions which have some direct dependence upon perception. The goddess, addressing the pupil whom she has summoned, leaves little doubt but that she regards the people uninitiated into her teaching as almost bereft of correct thinking skills. The youth is instructed that he should be thankful for the teaching which he is about to receive. "Young man, companion of immortal charioteers, who comest by the help of the steeds which bring thee to our dwelling: welcome!—since no evil fate has dispatched thee on thy journey by this road (for truly it is far from the path trodden by mankind); no, it is divine command and right. Thou shalt inquire into everything: both the motionless heart of well-rounded truth, and also the opinions of mortals, in which there is no true reliability" (frag. 1).[1]

The goddess instructs the youth that she will forbid him to rely upon any perceptual knowledge, or upon the perceptual faculties more generally, in this enterprise of learning. "But next I debar you from that way along which wander mortals knowing nothing, two-headed, for perplexity in their bosoms steers their intelligence astray, and they are carried along as deaf as they are blind, amazed, uncritical hordes, by whom To Be and Not To Be are regarded as the same and not the same, and (for whom) in everything there is a way of opposing stress" (frag. 6).

Parmenides' goddess makes it quite clear that she regards the ordinary opinions, the opinions dependent upon perceptual faculties and the common use of names, to be more than a little defective. We can observe, at this early point in our study, that the goddess must ultimately charge the common run of mortals with the grossest sort of incompetence in matters of right thinking, truth, and knowledge. For, if the goddess is able to prove her central claim, that coming-into-being cannot be a real event in nature, nor the characteristic of any truly existing object—then it must be inferred from this that the

ordinary speakers, technically speaking, do not know so much as what the real object(s) is or are.

Parmenides' goddess claims that she can prove that the only real thing that can be said to exist is something called "Being." The proofs which the goddess advances for this argument are, as Plato would later admit, "admirable," and we shall arrive at them shortly. Yet before taking up the proofs, we do wish to indicate the conclusions that the goddess ultimately draws from her own arguments in the "way of truth": "There is only one other description of the way remaining, namely, that (what is) Is. To this way there are very many sign-posts: that Being has no coming-into-being and no destruction, for it is whole of limb, without motion, and without end. And it never was, nor will be, because it is now, a whole all together, One, continuous; for what creation of it will you look for? How, whence could it have sprung? Nor shall I allow you to speak or think of it as springing from not-being; for it is neither expressible nor thinkable that what-is-not is" (frag. 8).

The goddess, even in this later part of the "way of truth," admonishes her student that he must forsake the old ways of knowing that he has relied upon in the past, for these involve perception, that is, common ground with the ordinary thinkers. "For this view can never predominate, that That Which Is Not exists. You must debar your thought from this way of search, nor let ordinary experience in its variety force you along this way, namely, that of allowing the eye, sightless as it is, and the ear, full of sound, and the tongue to rule; but you must judge by means of reason the much-contested proof which is expounded by me" (frag. 8).

It can already be seen that the goddess indicts the ordinary speakers for relying upon perceptual faculties as a means to gather knowledge about objects. As noted above, the goddess accuses the ordinary speakers of being permanently sunken into a dilemma of self-contradiction. To hear the goddess tell it, it is as if the ordinary speakers cannot utter any statement whatsoever, without simultaneously convicting themselves of double-talk or inconsistency.

The ordinary speakers, in the goddess's view, are not acquainted with the singular reality of the object she refers to as "Being." For this, the goddess's instruction is necessary. The goddess does not however wish for her pupil to impart any instruction to the others about this sacred "way of truth": for the demos, a different teaching, a "way of seeming" or appearance, will be dispensed, and the goddess clearly distinguishes that more public teaching from this private instruction in the truth which she pledges to her pupil. "To think is the same as the thought that It Is; for you will not find thinking without being, in regard to which there is an expression. For nothing else either is or shall be except Being, since Fate has tied it down to be a whole and motionless; therefore all the things that mortals have established, believ-

ing in their truth, are just a name: Becoming and perishing, Being and not-Being, and change of position, and alteration of bright color" (frag. 8).

THE GODDESS'S PROOF THAT BEING IS THE ONLY OBJECT THAT EXISTS

It will be useful to make some preliminary observations about the proofs that the goddess of Parmenides offers for her arguments, toward her claim that "Being" is the only true object, the only thing that actually exists. From the very outset, the goddess has warned the youth away from any recourse to his perceptual faculties. In part, one may indicate, the goddess forbids the pupil recourse to his perceptual faculties, in order to forestall any emergent speaking situation where the youth would be sharing common premises with the nonphilosophers.

This claim, that the goddess wishes to ensure that the youth refuses to begin any discussions or debates based upon mutually agreed upon, common evidence, is related to another claim that we shall make. This second claim is to the effect that the goddess cannot afford to simply ignore the ordinary speakers or the other sorts of philosophers among them. The doctrine that the goddess intends to teach her pupil is a doctrine designed for rhetorical combat: it is an argument designed to prevail in debate, and it would not be at all possible for the goddess's argument to prevail in debate if she were to refuse to engage with the ordinary speakers and their philosophic spokespersons from the outset.

No, the goddess's argument would not even amount to anything interesting if she did not intend to prove her doctrine in some mode of intellectual confrontation with the ordinary speakers. As we stated in the introduction to this work, epistemology, or the teaching of doctrines as to what it is possible for human minds to know, is joined very intimately in Greek philosophy to political projects. The goddess refuses to share any common fact as a foundation for discussion, and if we have not yet proved that this position of itself exudes a competitive attitude, we can nevertheless prove that the goddess intends for her student to be a victor in debates with the others. "At this point I cease my reliable theory and thought, concerning truth; from here onwards you must learn the opinions of mortals, listening to the deceptive ordering of my words. . . . This world order I describe to you throughout as it appears with all its phenomena, in order that no intellect of mortal men may outstrip you" (frag. 8).

The point here is simple: if the goddess does indeed wish to prevail over the ordinary speakers in a debate, she is not actually at liberty to simply cherish her truths in a condition of disengagement. Rather, she must engage

the ordinary speakers, and if she is to have a chance of obtaining a decisive victory over the ordinary speakers, on matters of fact and truth—as she promises that she will—then she must at the very least appear to conduct an argument which shares some common evidence with those ordinary speakers. For if she does not share any common evidence with the ordinary speakers, it would not be possible for her to refute their beliefs or statements. The goddess has forsworn the recourse to perceptual information such as the ordinary speakers rely upon, so this makes one wonder exactly how the goddess will transact this interaction with the ordinary speakers, pursuant to the victory of argument that she is in quest of. To this we now wish to turn.

The severity of the goddess's distinction between ordinary speakers and her philosophy is one of the few things that Parmenides scholars firmly agree on. "The goddess has two stories to tell: the truth, and mortal opinions" (156). "The way of opinion is paved with falsity: 'there is no true trust' along it, and its description is 'deceitful.'"[2] "But the criticism applies to all 'ignorant mortals' whether philosophers or not. Its point is that what is, is and cannot ever not be. To maintain this is to go against all common belief, according to which there is no such thing as genesis, the process of coming into being."[3]

"He proclaims the 'truth' about being, which is eternal and without beginning, opposed to appearance and all the deceptive 'opinions of mortals.'"[4] "She proceeds to deride the hopelessly confused path of mortals, whose mistake is traced in their reliance on the senses. The alternative approach that she advocates involves abandoning the senses in favor of pure reason."[5]

The second fragment is the place where the goddess delivers her most pivotal argument. However, the concluding lines of the first fragment are indispensable to understanding the second fragment. The goddess, after brazenly impugning the integrity of ordinary speakers, nevertheless directs her student to adopt an interrogatory pose toward the ordinary opinions. She will neither place her arm around them with warm embrace, nor will she openly upbraid them: rather, she will take out her clipboard, and interview them, question them. "But nevertheless thou shalt learn these things (opinions) also—how one should go through all the things-that-seem, without exception, and test them" (frag. 1).

Why does the goddess instruct the youth to subject the ordinary opinions to examination, to "go through all the things that seem"? For the goddess has already laid it down as a postulate that there is no redeemable sliver of enlightenment to be obtained from the ordinary opinions. The goddess's unlimited embargo upon any and all evidence adduced by the nonphilosophers is in effect from the beginning of the chariot ride to the furthest reaches of the doxa, even if the poem has not announced as much yet. So it cannot be for any kind of information for herself that the goddess undertakes to "test" them.

There are other explanations as to why the goddess seeks to interview the ordinary speakers about their use of names and the objects they indicate. Parmenides is a philosopher. The authority that his goddess wishes to possess to a considerable degree depends upon the appearance of expertise. Nothing can come from the goddess's carefully wrought arguments if the ordinary speakers do not feel, are not made to feel, that these arguments implicate their own beliefs and naming practices. In short, the goddess must link her argument to the ways of belief and the ordinary opinions, if she is to stand a reasonable chance of exercising authority over them.

In order to be able to shake up or stun the ordinary speakers and the authority indigenous to the ordinary use of names, the goddess must institute a method of inquiry which at least appears to share a common object with the others. For if the goddess cannot lodge an objection to the ordinary use of names, if she cannot demonstrate an inconsistency in the ordinary use of names, she will not be able to claim that her "well-rounded truth" is superior to the ordinary opinions. To accomplish this, she must appear to share an object in common with the ordinary speakers.

PARMENIDES' SECOND FRAGMENT

Parmenides' goddess, when she has settled such preliminary matters as we have described, proceeds directly to her proofs. Parmenides, thus, announces in the second fragment of his "way of truth," that there are only two possible ways of inquiry. When a human being makes an inquiry, therefore, according to Parmenides, there are really only two possible modes which can carry such inquiry. "Come, I will tell you—and you must accept my word when you have heard it—the ways of inquiry which alone are to be thought: the one that IT IS, and it is not possible for it not to be, is the way of credibility, for it follows truth; the other, that IT IS NOT, and that it is bound not to be: this I tell you is a path that cannot be explored; for you could neither recognize that which Is Not, nor express it" (frag. 2).

It could be useful to point out what some might consider to be a small matter. When we profess to be speaking about a way of inquiry, "inquiry" suggests the interrogatory: that is, that we are asking a question. Parmenides has stated that there are two possible "ways of inquiry," but the fact seems quite clear that these two things that Parmenides enumerates under the banner of "ways of inquiry" are *not* interrogatories. They are answers, not questions. Parmenides' goddess has instructed us, actually, that there are only two possible *answers* to a legitimate inquiry: that it is, or that it is not. Yet she is leaving something out. Which are the objects, in the above equation, that are at least to be inquired *into*? We have been informed of the possible answers

that we are allowed to give to a legitimate mode of inquiry by Parmenides' goddess, but she has failed to enumerate to us the actual question, and the subject of the question, to which the "two roads" are advertised as the only possible responses.

Let us strive after simplicity and clarity, on such a heavily contested matter. Parmenides' goddess instructs us that, if we wish to inquire, about anything, that there is only one legitimate response that we are authorized, by truth, to arrive at: "that it is." We acknowledge that the goddess has directed us as to what the answer must be, to the only response that she regards as legitimate. And yet she has not yet characterized her actual interrogatory: must we not have an object to inquire into, before we can ask the question, as to whether or not it exists?

Parmenides is duly famous for the ferocious power of his "elenchus," the seemingly steel jaws of the "either-or" predicament into which he has alleged to cast his interlocutor. We, in our appraisal of this mighty argument, have observed the following facts: the argument sets out proclaiming that it will instruct us in the only possible modes of questioning, or searching for truth, that are possible, but what the goddess has ended up providing us with, rather, are two possible responses to one possible question.

Why must it be the only legitimate question to ask, about any object, whether it exists or not? Are we not entitled to ask what color an object is? Or what shape it is? Or how old an object is? Are these not possible modes of inquiry? If they are not, we have not yet been sufficiently instructed as to why they are not possible "ways of inquiry." We will acknowledge that if our ability to ask questions is limited to asking whether or not an object exists, then the possible answers are as Parmenides describes them. Yet these answers are not themselves inquiries, and this is not a minor matter.

If Parmenides had set forth his proof as follows, a host of questions might quickly arise spontaneously enough: "the only legitimate answers to any truthful inquiry are 'it is' or 'it is not.'" We would soon wonder why, exactly, we must be limited to asking the question, "does it exist?" Yet more important, we would have to immediately inquire as to what object we are at all talking about. About which object are we required to ask, "does it exist?" Parmenides has left this part out of his argument, but it seems to be a clearly gaping hole.

Earlier, we alluded to the goddess's need to have interaction and engagement with the ordinary speakers. It is noted that the goddess must at least appear to share some common objects with the ordinary speakers, so that actual discourse, that is, two people referring to an identical object, is even possible. It has also been seen that the goddess has instructed the youth that he must relearn the ordinary opinions, or what the ordinary speakers think they know.

One can make the inference here that in order for the goddess to appear to share some object in common with her interlocutors among the ordinary speakers, she must be asking her question, focusing her inquiry, upon the objects that the ordinary speakers regard as real. The goddess's pupil, in other words, is instructed to conduct an inquiry, the response to which can only be "it is" or "it is not." Furthermore, it seems reasonable to indicate that the only objects that the goddess or her pupil could ask the ordinary speakers about, are those very same perishable objects which it is the point of the goddess's argument to invalidate or nullify for purposes of truth and knowledge.

If the goddess and her pupil ask any ordinary speaker whatsoever about any object that said ordinary speaker has in his possession, "Does it exist or does it not exist?" the answer to this question must indeed be, "it is." However, it is far from clear at this point that this colloquy, this interaction in speech, reveals the existence of that solitary object which Parmenides refers to as "Being": "that Being has no coming into being and no destruction, for it is whole of limb, without motion, and without end" (frag. 8).

The second fragment of the "way of truth" has been the object of the most intense scholarly investigation. It is an observation of some moment, then, that this glaring contradiction in the second fragment, or at least a serious inconsistency, has not rated much comment. "The one, that IT IS, and it is not possible for IT NOT TO BE, is the way of credibility, for it follows truth; the other, that IT IS NOT, and that IT is bound NOT TO BE: this I tell you is a path that cannot be explored; for you could neither recognize that which is not, nor express it" (frag. 2, p. 42). Indeed, in the eighth fragment, when the goddess reiterates these "routes," she reveals these roads to be more like an ultimatum: "The decision on these matters depends on the following: It IS, or IT IS NOT. It is therefore decided—as is inevitable, that one must ignore the one way as unthinkable and inexpressible (for it is no true way) and take the other as the way of Being and Reality" (frag. 8).

The goddess must have a direct encounter with the ordinary speakers, en route to her "well-rounded truth." "Inquirer" or examiner is the posture that the goddess has settled upon as the most advantageous mode of interaction with them. Some form of interaction there must be. An inquiry will allow the goddess to accomplish what cannot be accomplished on any other terms: it will allow the goddess to *appear* to concede the existence of the ordinary objects that the ordinary speakers name, yet the posture of inquiry will not *commit* the goddess to this premise. Indeed, Parmenides' goddess never does officially concede the reality of the perishable bodies in any part of her teaching on truth, or anywhere else for that matter. The point here is not that the goddess disbelieves in the reality of the perishable world (far from it); it is rather that the evidentiary value of the truths known by ordinary speakers will remain, in this arrangement, null and void.

The issue is names. Shared premises, such as an admission of the reality of the perishable objects, would oblige the goddess to the evidence adduced by ordinary speakers in defense of their account of how names should be used. It is this evidence, rather than the reality or the unreality of the perishable objects, which is the goddess's foremost concern. She does not wish to live in a cave like a Cyclops: she wishes to live in customary society, only exempt from the customary use of names.

Perhaps the predominant view among Parmenides' commentators today is that the goddess's arguments are arguments about logic. Logic involves compulsion of a sort: if we have a piece of knowledge that we know securely, we may oftentimes infer additional truths from that knowledge that we have. Logic is a movement of the mind. If Tom is sitting here with me in Erie, Pennsylvania, he is not at this moment in England.

Parmenides' goddess very much intends to rely on the irresistible power of such a logic in the unfolding of her argument. However, in order for such a logic to actually take effect, we must *have* that original piece of knowledge, from which the inference can be obtained. Not only that: but the goddess and the ordinary speakers must actually share an identical piece of knowledge, in order for the goddess's inferences therefrom, to bind them as well. So it makes all the difference in the world what this original piece of knowledge is that the goddess can claim to share with the ordinary speakers. In an interview, in a question-and-answer session, we have the closest approximation that the goddess will allow herself to make to such a premise. It is our obligation to ferret out the facts. Unless the goddess shares some piece of preexistent knowledge with the ordinary speakers, there will be no distinction between initiated knowers of "nature," and unhappy denizens of "convention."

The "test" or the "inquiry" that the goddess must advise the youth to undertake, even though she does not say so explicitly, can be one and only one thing. When the ordinary speaker has assigned a name to an object, the goddess in turn will launch her inquiry: "does it exist?" The ordinary speaker will supply an object. The goddess can quite easily remain officially agnostic in evidentiary terms as regards such an object, even as she asks the ordinary speaker her question.

THE COLLISION BETWEEN THE GODDESS'S INQUIRY AND THE ORDINARY USE OF NAMES

Ordinary speakers do not know of any objects that they can indicate by the names "Being" and "Not Being." They do not encounter any such objects, and they therefore do not name any such objects. Parmenides' goddess does

not have an object named "Not Being" either; "for you could neither recognize that which is not, nor express it" (frag. 2). The goddess emphatically does, however, have an object named "Being." "One should both say and think that Being is; for To Be is possible, and Nothingness is not possible. This I command you to consider; for from the latter way of search I first of all debar you" (frag. 6).

It is clear enough that if the goddess can reach the premise, "Being is," that she can make all sorts of inferences. The obstacles to her achievement of this feat are essentially two: she must persuade the ordinary speakers that *they* say this, and she must demonstrate *what* she names. Our concerns are still broader. We need to determine whether ordinary speakers can be said to utter "Being exists," in a way that extends to the objects that they ordinarily name. Nothing less than this will give the goddess her shared premise: the one that her logic cannot be unleashed without.

As we have indicated, ordinary speakers do not know of any objects called "being" or "not being." On the other hand, "is" and "is not" are locutions which attend to almost every single sentence that human beings utter. "This day is overcast, it is not sunny." "The speech is melodious, it is not sour to the ear." Ordinary speech therefore is heavily interlaced with predications of being and not being. The opportunity for rendering ordinary statements into the apparent identification of "being" and "not being" as subjects certainly exists, for a resourceful rhetorician. So we must investigate the matter, to figure out what the facts actually are.

Ordinary speakers, when they attempt to name an object, do not have a question as to whether or not it exists. If there is something to be named, it exists in some mode. Objects are of many kinds. Objects are human beings, plants, things constructed by humans, and the like, but also questions (such as the one the goddess puts to ordinary speakers), literary characters such as Achilles, and mental experiences including dreams and anxieties. Courageous speeches are objects, and so are unity and number, hot and cold, cows and Theaetetus. The objects are diverse, and the name appropriate to an object is one that hits its mark, or names the kind of object it is.

Being, insofar as the ordinary speaker has experience of it and occasion to indicate it in speech, is *a part* of the object that is named. It is not their predominant part, nor is it the actual name of the object, but it is a part of the *particular* object that is *inseparable* from it. The beach chair that I name has being; the aspiration that I describe has being; the reputation of the philosopher that I am speaking about has being, but for each and every object, the being that is a part of the object is inseparable from the nature of that object. There is no such thing as a "Being" that encompasses both mermaids and mailmen. Rather, being is a part of the objects that we name: and when we assign a name incorrectly to an object, we have called it something that it is *not*.

The ordinary speaker names an object. Enter the goddess and her tests. What test does she employ? She asks the speaker whether the object he has named *exists*. If the respondent is a student well trained by Plato's Socrates, he will speak carefully. He will say, "yes, the chair *has* being." "Being is a part of the chair." He will not speak casually or offhandedly to Parmenides' goddess. He will *not* say simply, "it exists." For "it exists" is a close approximation to the goddess's postulate, "It is." The respondent who answers, "yes, it is," if he is firmly taken in hand by the goddess's superior dialectical skills, will find the goddess saying that they both agree: that "Being exists." But this is not what the ordinary speaker has ever thought; Being is not any object that he has ever undertaken to name; and he would not have the slightest idea, no more than Jonathan Barnes does, of what to make of the locution "Being exists."[6]

This is in fact the method, however, by which the goddess seeks to lay hold of her object "Being." In the goddess's view, or at least in the argument that she attempts to execute, "Being" is the only name that proper speakers should ever utter. That is to say, it is "Being," rather than a chair, a plant, a volume of Shakespeare, or a threat, that is always the self-same object to be named in the goddess's theory. When she applies her linguistic analysis to the ordinary speakers, all of the objects that they enumerate vanish. This is to say, they will not qualify as official accounts of truth. As conventions, they will be worked into the record books. But what the ordinary speakers name will not be included among the goddess's accounts of what is real and true, the "Q and A" of her linguistic regime. In her language rules, but not in that of ordinary speakers, the names of the various objects are simply errant names for one and the same object: Being.

Ordinary speakers, and many philosophers for that matter, are not going to be in any position to extricate themselves from the goddess's elenchus. By sheer argument ad hominem, by the rivalrous texture of the goddess's characterizations, it is not going to be an easy task to challenge her. "One should both say and think that Being is: for To Be is possible, and Nothingness is not possible. This I command you to consider. But next I debar you from that way along which wander mortals knowing nothing, two-headed, for perplexity in their bosoms steers their intelligence astray, and they are carried along as deaf as they are blind, amazed, uncritical hordes, by whom To Be and Not To Be are regarded as the same and not the same, and for whom in everything there is a way of opposing stress" (Freeman, frag. 6, p. 43). "For this view can never predominate, that That which is not exists. You must debar your thought from this way of search, nor let ordinary experience in its variety force you along this way, namely that of allowing the eye, sightless as it is, and the ear, full of sound and the tongue, to rule; but you must judge by means of reason the much-contested proof which is expounded by me" (frag. 7, p. 43).

No doubt, the goddess has expertly managed to appear to implicate the perishable objects and the ordinary use of names in her elenchus. Appearances, however, do not matter, when they are at loggerheads with the truth, and when one is making arguments before a tribunal committed to the ascertainment, not of appearances, but of reality. The object that the goddess construes the ordinary speakers to be referring to, is no such thing: "There is only one other description of the way remaining, namely that What is, is. To this way there are very many sign posts: that Being has no coming into being, and no destruction, for it is whole of limb, without motion, and without end. And it never was, nor will be, because it is now, a whole all together" (frag. 8, p. 43). The "motionless heart of well-rounded truth" is rather like a blip on a weather satellite, which suggests a coming hurricane, but proves to be nothing more than a malfunction in the circuits.

DOES THE SECOND FRAGMENT HAVE A SUBJECT?

The discussion up to this juncture has attempted to establish the point that, in the second fragment, we must first of all arrive at a correct estimation of what the operative question is. In the model that we have investigated, any object can serve as the subject for the purposes of Parmenides' goddess. The thrust of our analysis is to illustrate that the nature of the subject really doesn't matter insofar as the structure of the goddess's argument is concerned. The existence of "Being" is not proved.

Our scholarship however is all too obedient to the goddess. We tend to keep our place in line, taking Parmenides' directions as if they really were from the mouth of a god. We hear that we are being given instructions on how to inquire, and then we are told, not of inquiries, but of how we simply and utterly must respond to the only inquiry which will pass Parmenides' muster. Our scholarship has not been very adventurous in its attempt to come to terms with Parmenides' elenchus. The debate as to whether or not the enumerated answers that the goddess bestows upon us involve a subject probably constitutes the single-most disputed issue in modern Parmenides studies.

A few scholars urge us to believe that body is the subject of the second fragment. John Burnet is among the writers who hold the view that Parmenides' goddess is referring to Body when she talks about Being. "In the first part of his poem, we find Parmenides chiefly interested to prove that *It Is*; but it is not quite obvious at first sight what *It* is precisely that is. He says simply, what is, is. There can be no real doubt that this is what we call body" (178). "The assertion that it is amounts just to this, that the universe is a plenum;

and that there is no such thing as empty space, either inside or outside the world."[7]

Karl Popper agrees with Burnet that body is the goddess's subject. In Popper's analysis, Parmenidean Being indicates that "the real world is full: it is a spherical block of continuous matter" (69). "Parmenides is a materialist who believes in the power of pure thought." "And this has the consequence that, in this world, there can be no movement. Nothing ever happens" (69). "To any normal person this teaching must have appeared not merely false but outrageous. What is shocking in Parmenides' poem . . . is not that the goddess declares our human world of experience to be false and illusory, but that she reveals and claims to be true—and even proves!—a theory of reality that must seem impossible and even insane to every sane person" (69).[8]

Parmenides' goddess, however, compared to Popper, is demure. She is loathe to even mention the name "body" either in the first or second parts of the poem. Not even in the eighth fragment, which weighed so heavily on subsequent pre-Socratic philosophers, does the goddess clearly articulate a subject of body. It is not until the "way of seeming," when the discussion of truth has been ceremoniously closed, that the goddess finally begins to talk about bodies that bear *some* resemblance to the ones that the ordinary speakers name.

There is reason for this reticence. The goddess, as demonstrated, imposes the most severe prohibitions on the evidence that is admissible to use in any discussions which bear upon her well-rounded truth. Perception and evidence obtained through the senses are fully barred from such discussions: this prohibition would be impossible to enforce if the goddess were to argue directly that the perishable bodies are unreal. She would be compelled, under such circumstances, to answer the questions that her original "inquiry" manages to dodge: that is, whether the objects that the ordinary speakers name are objects that she *concedes* the reality of.

This type of argument about Parmenides' subject is not without merit, however. For it urges us to pay attention to the implications of the goddess's argument. If the goddess can appear to extract her theory of Being from the ordinary speakers, and if she can appear to infer the predicates that she expounds upon as "signs" in fragment 8, then it can be made to appear that the goddess is merely imposing restrictions upon the way people use names, rather than denying the reality of the perishable bodies outright.

R. J. Hankinson is one of the most recent scholars to investigate this issue. "Read thus, the core of Parmenides' argument is directly metaphysical. Everything so far is building up to the only argument upon which Parmenides intends to rest any weight, and that is the one involving physical and metaphysical considerations to be found at the beginning of b8" (75). Hankinson disputes a more popular interpretation of Parmenides' ways of inquiry, which regards them as regulations on the use of names, or semantic

points. “Moreover, if the bar on speaking of nothing is derived from purely semantic considerations, it is hard to see why it should have any tendency in and of itself to establish the conclusion that Parmenides wants, namely the eternal existence of whatever is spoken of” (76). “Here we are squarely in what I take to be the heart of the argument: yet it looks as though the ban on referring to the non-existent is here offered as the reason why nothing can come to be, reversing my preferred order of logical dependence” (77).[9]

It is not clear how Parmenides’ goddess could possibly reach this Being that she refers to, if body is the subject of b2. If body is the subject of b2, then even if the goddess wants to make perishable bodies disappear into insignificance, she is going to have to demonstrate that directly by referring to the perishable bodies. This the goddess cannot do. There would be no need for an embargo on the senses and perceptual knowledge if the goddess had a way to illustrate the defects of such knowledge once it was possessed. The goddess certainly intends to impose restrictions on what shall count as true objects, but the goddess believes that her argument cannot succeed if she must deal with such evidence as ordinary speakers bring forth about perishable bodies.

PARMENIDES AS THE FOUNDER OF LOGIC

The most popular view among Parmenides scholars is that the goddess is a sojourner in the rarefied airs of logical thought. Leonardo Taran, G. E. L. Owen,[10] and Jonathan Barnes are among those scholars who insist that there is no implied subject in the second fragment. A. P. D. Mourelatos shares this view.[11] This is no doubt the view that the goddess herself would wish for us to take.

Taran believes that we are all defenseless against the goddess’s argument. He maintains that we are all obliged to concede to Parmenides that it is impossible to talk about any object except for the one that the goddess calls “Being.” According to Taran, the goddess is not referring to any subject in the third and fifth lines of b2. Rather, according to Taran, the goddess is referring to “existence” or “being.” “The great merit of Parmenides is that he carries the debate back to a previous stage and shows that whatever exists (whatever this is) can have only the characteristic of existence plus certain determinations established by reasoning” (38). “The point of departure of Parmenides is that there is existence, whatever the existent may be, and this nobody was going to deny” (38). “The concept of existence is here expressed by a verb, but Parmenides could equally have said, ‘one way asserts Being’; let it be stated once and for all that the different idioms which Parmenides uses to express Being and non-Being are synonymous” (37). “Parmenides

starts from the priority of the ontological problem. His point of departure is existence" (37).[12]

I am not familiar with any maneuver whereby Parmenides' goddess "carries the debate back to a previous stage." The goddess never does explicitly tell us how she reaches her "being." She leads into her assertions about being by commanding the youth to conduct an inquiry into any and all ordinary opinions. It is only from such "inquiry" that the goddess stands a chance to appear to share an object in common with the ordinary speakers.

Taran speaks as if Parmenides' goddess could possibly begin with the objects ordinarily named, such as the chair I am sitting on, and from that point "carries the debate back to a previous stage." She does no such thing. She never asserts the existence of the chair; she never affirms the existence of the chair; she is only interested in getting me to utter "it is" somehow. Parmenides' goddess, most unlike Plato, cannot ascend to her science while sharing a premise with the ordinary speakers. But then again, Plato, most unlike Parmenides, utterly defends that ordinary insistence that opposite names shall never be used to indicate one and the same object in a contradictory way.

Note Taran's observation: he says that the goddess's formulation that "there is Being" is something "nobody was going to deny." One thing is for certain: if the goddess herself admitted the existence of the objects that the ordinary speakers name, and then openly claimed that "existence" is the essence of those objects, her argument would be entirely bereft of logical force. There are no ordinary speakers, and very few philosophers, who would allow that there is any coherent or intelligible substance in such a claim. The goddess cannot launch her own theory of Being until she has maneuvered the ordinary speakers into a position such that they themselves *appear* to utter it. Yet the fact of the matter is that this is not an object that they have any familiarity with, and interlocutors who have been overpowered by an argument that they really do not follow, whatever the civil courts may say in cases of ordinary contracts, are no evidence of pith and moment before a tribunal of truth.

What nobody is going to deny, is that the perishable objects that he *names* exist. When the ordinary speaker, confronted with the goddess's inquiry, gives the response, "it exists," it does not constitute a transaction within one self-same domain of discourse. The ordinary speaker, when he utters "it exists" or "it is," refers to one of the kinds of objects as we have illustrated above. The goddess, however, as self-appointed interpreter of the ordinary utterance, construes the interlocutor's utterance in the entirely different domain of language that we have enumerated. The goddess's question is a snare, a fetter-in-waiting. This is the only possible way for the goddess to arrive at the name "being" with ordinary speakers seemingly in tow. Since she does not want to indicate the existence of the ordinary objects herself, she

can ask the ordinary speaker whether the objects that he names exist. Thus Taran is wrong: Parmenides' goddess cannot begin with "Being." Ordinary speakers do not have an object which fits this description. They are familiar with the name, but only as an indication of the reality of the objects which they are familiar with or have experience of and name.

OWEN'S INTERPRETATION OF PARMENIDES' SECOND FRAGMENT

G. E. L. Owen argues that Parmenides proves that the ordinary speakers are committed to contradictions when they speak. Owen claims that "being" and "not being" are objects that ordinary speakers attempt to distinguish. To Owen, when the ordinary speakers name any object whatsoever, all of those names are simply synonyms for "being." "Ordinary men want to keep both einai and ouk einia in use: horses exist, mermaids do not; there is sandy soil here but not there; there are dodos at one time, not at another. It is this qualified answer that Parmenides denounced as looking both ways . . . moving in opposite directions . . . and his first fundamental argument against it is that it treats existence and non-existence as different yet identical" (11). "Ordinary men and cosmologists alike try to distinguish existence from non existence by saying, for instance, that lions do exist and mermaids do not; yet in distinguishing them they identify them, for by the argument already brought against the first wrong road in b2, if nonexistent mermaids could be talked about they would be existent" (12). "Either with or without this reinforcing argument however, the subject of the reasoning is clear. What is declared to exist in b2 is simply what can be talked or thought about; for the proof of its existence is, that if it did not exist, it could not be talked or thought about" (16).[13]

Ordinary speakers entertain no such enterprise to "distinguish existence from non-existence." The assignment of names to objects always involves an object to be named, and that object exists. It is in the *assignment of a name* to an object where falsity, not-being, can be produced, for the being *of* the object to be named *belongs* to the object. All objects whatsoever, to Owen, must indicate the same "being." No doubt the goddess would like for us to believe something very like that. But there is no such loose "being" floating around the cosmos, to be pulled out of the air and momentarily linked to "whatever can be talked or thought about." The being to which ordinary speakers refer belongs to the objects that they name. This being cannot be separated from the named object, and the mode of being must vary in proportion as the natures of the objects themselves vary.

Let us consider Owen's example about the lions and the mermaids. Ordinary speakers, Owen maintains, will say that the lions exist, but that the mermaids do not. Is Owen to maintain, therefore, that ordinary speakers never have occasion to assign the name "mermaid" to an object correctly? How else would the name be in our vocabulary? In discussing a story, a poetic work, an artistic creation, an ordinary speaker may very well refer to a mermaid. Is the mermaid, a creature of literature and imagination, *like* the lion, the naturally generated king of the jungle? Evidently not. Is the "being" that the lion has the same as the being that the mermaid has? Not if being is a part of the objects that we name, but in Owen's view, it is really "being" that lions and mermaids *mean*.

Owen, in his previous statement, is casting his nets broadly, in an attempt to find evidence in favor of the goddess's argument. "There is sand here, but not there." According to Owen, Parmenides set out to describe the presuppositions upon which any and all human opinions, be they of scientists or ordinary people, must rest. "Parmenides set himself to give the correct or most plausible analysis of those presuppositions on which ordinary men and not just theorists seem to build their picture of the physical world" (9). (These are in fact presuppositions reached by analysis, but Parmenides presents them as conscious past decisions.)

Residents of a zoo differ from characters in a novel. Mood swings in a personality differ in their being from ingredients in a cake batter. The thing to be borne in mind is that the being implicit in any object named cannot be separated from that object; the being an object possesses reflects the distinctive nature of that object. Being is a part of the object, the object is not a part of "Being."

CHARLES KAHN, PARMENIDES, AND THE "VERIDICAL USE" OF "TO BE"

Charles Kahn attempts to argue that we can understand Parmenides' thesis about "Being" if we first consult the ordinary uses of "to be" in natural Greek as might have been practiced in the sixth century. We could then interpret Parmenides' use of "being" as an addition to the ordinary uses, as a philosophical expansion as it were of the common vocabulary. "I am concerned in this paper with the philological basis for Greek ontology; that is to say, with the raw material which was provided for philosophical analysts by ordinary use and the meaning of the verb einai, 'to be.'"[14] "But a philosopher—even a philosopher ignorant of other languages—is always free to make a distinction which the language does not make for him." "What I hope to do in this paper is to show that when the Greek concept of being (as introduced by Parme-

nides and developed by Plato) is properly understood it represents a valid and indeed inevitable topic for philosophic inquiry. It turns out, in fact, to be fundamentally the same topic that is pursued in the modern ontological tradition of Frege, the early Wittgenstein, and Quine."[15] "In any case, quite apart from the question of philosophic usage of the verb, the most fundamental value of einai when used alone (without predicates) is not 'to exist,' but 'to be so,' 'to be the case,' or 'to be true.'"[16] "In any case, quite apart from the question of philosophic usage, there is absolutely no doubt that this meaning of 'to be' (namely, 'to be so, to be true') is one of the oldest idiomatic uses of the verb in Greek, and indeed in IndoEuropean" (251).

Kahn thus admits that ordinary speakers certainly use the name "being" to indicate "that which is true, or that which is the case." In what, then, does Parmenides' innovation consist? Kahn indicates that Parmenides has performed a philosophical transformation upon the ordinary use of the name "being" as it pertains to indications of truth or "what is the case." The modern tradition of formal logic is cited in support, but we do not have space at present to embark upon that inquiry. In any event, we acknowledge Kahn's recognition of the ordinary use of the name "being" to indicate "what is so." Kahn evidently wishes to persuade us here of something that Parmenides' goddess has long wished to commend to us: that the Eleatic employment of the name "being" actually is somehow kin to the ordinary usage. We have demonstrated, however, that it is not thus akin.

When Kahn draws the distinction between the "existential" and the "veridical" significations of the name "being," it is instructive. Parmenides, Kahn claims, in his second fragment pronouncements above all, wishes to indicate the "veridical" use of the name being, to the exclusion of the "existential" use. The goddess, when she proclaims that "it is" shall be the only approved answer to the philosophically certified question of moment—does it exist?—in Kahn's analysis need not be construed as referring to any particular existent. Any expectations along these lines would fail to notice the new use of the name "being" which Parmenides' goddess is uttering, or which her question imposes upon the goddess's respondents.

The ordinary speaker, let us say, uses the word "being" or "to be" in various ways. "Socrates exists," indicates the existence of Socrates. Kahn refers to this as the "existential" use of "to be." The ordinary speaker can just as easily observe that "Socrates is wearing a hat," which indicates a predication about Socrates, rather than an indication of his mere existence. This is called the "predicational" use of to be, by Kahn.

The ordinary speaker, in both of our examples, is referring to Socrates. The being that the ordinary speaker refers to is in both cases *part* of Socrates, and cannot be separated from him. *That* being is *his* being. This is how ordinary names refer. Yet the formal logic and analytic principles relied upon by Kahn revoke the referring function of names. Thus when it comes time for

Kahn to give us his account of the above utterances, these utterances no longer refer in the manner that the language of the ordinary speaker refers. "The most obvious distinction which seems to us to be ignored in the notion of being is that between existence and predication. The logician will go further, and point out that the word 'is' means one thing when it represents the existential quantifier, something else when it represents class inclusion or class membership, something else when it represents identity, and so forth."[17] "The concept of being in Greek philosophy refers to the nature of reality or the structure of the world, in the very general sense of 'the world,' which includes whatever we can know or investigate and whatever we can describe in true or false statements."[18]"So for Parmenides the veridical notion of being leads directly to the concept of reality as opposed to the appearance of false seeming: being and truth . . . are explicitly contrasted with the erroneous opinions (or seemings, doxai) of mortals" (37). "Being for the philosophers as for Parmenides means what is or can be truly known and truly said."[19]

When the ordinary speaker utters that "Socrates refuses to mollycoddle the pronouncement of falsehoods," he or she is making a "veridical" statement as regards Socrates. To indicate Socrates' passion for the truth is indeed to employ the name "being" in the veridical sense, that is, an utterance which attempts to articulate what is the case, or the true state of affairs. Yet in Kahn's estimation, the veridical use of being which Parmenides' employs cannot specifically refer to any single perishable object. It must "refer to the nature of reality or the structure of the world," that object which the ordinary speaker neither names, nor could even conceive of. Once again, the issue consists in Parmenides' attempt to convert the name "being" into the object of reference, or at least to divorce the ordinary speaker's object of reference from this philosophic employment of the name "being." No matter how we may parse this dichotomy, what we find is that Kahn is not able to identity a common object between the Eleatic doctrine and the ordinary use of names, a kinship which Kahn very much wishes to claim for Parmenides' language skills.

The ordinary statement that "the fox is in the chicken coop" constitutes a veridical use of the verb "to be": it aims to tell the truth about the chicken coop and the fox which has penetrated it. There is no road that Kahn has illuminated which leads from the statement about the chicken coop, to an all-encompassing and timeless object called being. To the contrary: when ordinary people use the veridical sense of the name "to be," it is almost always a matter of urgency or special concern *in time*. If the chicken coop were to be miraculously renamed as "being," it would no longer necessarily occur to us that the fox posed any sort of threat to it. We may easily yawn, or turn our attention elsewhere, to relieve the strain upon our faculties that this onslaught of abstraction carries into effect.

To reiterate, it's not as if ordinary speakers fail to use the name "being" to indicate truth. If ordinary speakers did not concern themselves with truth, Parmenides would not be so opposed to the "opposite forms" that they have named. But ordinary speakers are never talking about something called "Being" when they have occasion to use the word "being": not in "veridical" matters (which they obviously refer to) nor in any other context. The object of Being that Kahn attempts to supply to Parmenides' goddess, with the help of formal logic, is destined to fail in that enterprise, because in truth it cannot deliver the shared premise which is the only possible foundation for Parmenides' supposedly devastating arguments against "coming to be."

THE DISCUSSION OF BODY IN FRAGMENT 8 AND IN THE WAY OF SEEMING

The eighth fragment opens up immediately with arguments that do not make much sense, if they are not arguments about body. It is certain that Parmenides intends for us to apply these arguments *to* body. Yet the goddess will not deign to actually talk about body outright until she has closed down the "way of truth," and closed the curtain on the teaching she intends for the youth to worship. "At this point I cease my reliable theory and thought, concerning Truth; from here onwards you must learn the opinions of mortals, listening to the deceptive order of my words" (44).

In the above statement, the goddess brings us back to the first part of the poem, to the initial meeting between the goddess and the youth. There the goddess promised the youth that she would teach him all things: both the well-rounded truth, *and* the opinions of mortals. The opinions of mortals are not part of the well-rounded truth. But the goddess fully intends to impart a way of glossing the ordinary opinions so that they will come into line with the imperatives of the goddess's core arguments. "Thou shalt inquire into everything: both the motionless heart of well-rounded truth, and also the opinions of mortals, in which there is no true reliability. But nevertheless thou shalt learn these things (opinions) also—how one should go through all the things that seem, without exception, and test them" (frag. 1).

In the eighth fragment, the goddess's apparent references to body are getting stronger all the time. And this is evidently related to the upcoming teaching of the doxa. Just as the goddess's entire enterprise is formulated in a rivalrous disposition toward the ordinary speakers, so the relationship between the official arguments about being in the second fragment and the way of seeming are purposely shadowy and vague. The goddess's arguments will not be of much worth if she cannot package them in such a way that they can be employed to intervene between ordinary speakers and their customary use

of names. This does not change the fact, however, that the goddess denies all direct avenues from perceptual evidence to her core arguments. That is why the goddess does not directly utter statements about body until after the official teaching has been excused from the stage.

This brings us to an important observation: that the goddess's attempted derivation of "Being," as a common truth for both her and the ordinary speakers, fails. It fails, and must fail, when it is fully comprehended. It must fail because it is not true.

The arguments pertinent to body in the early stages of the eighth fragment are still carefully subsumed under the "ways of inquiry" theory in the second fragment. Nevertheless, most of the major pre-Socratic philosophers construed those "signposts" to be not only direct arguments about body, but as seemingly insurmountable arguments about body. "For nothing else either is or shall be except Being, since Fate has tied it down to be a whole and motionless; therefore all things that mortals have established, believing in their truth, are just a name: becoming and perishing, Being and not-Being, and change of position, and alteration of bright color" (frag. 8). "How could Being perish? How could it come into being? If it came into being, it is not; and so too if it is about-to-be at some future time. Thus Coming-into-being is quenched, and Destruction also into the unseen."

These "signposts" are not direct arguments about body in the structure of Parmenides' thesis. Yet if Parmenides was to find himself stripped of his "ways of inquiry," would he possibly change his posture and embrace the arguments about Being in fragment 8 as direct arguments about body?

It is only when the goddess has closed down her diviner's window, and ceased uttering her truths, that she ever gives positive expression to names that refer to bodies overtly. "At this point I cease my reliable theory and thought" (frag. 8). The bodies that are described in the doxa are configured, by the goddess, so as to make possible a direct attack on what ordinary speakers actually do insist upon when they speak and assign names to objects. That which ordinary speakers insist upon, is that opposite names do not refer to the same thing. The goddess launches a preemptive offensive against this deeply anchored principle among the ordinary speakers. Perhaps their reluctance to use opposite names to identify one single object will be broken down, if the goddess first of all defines every *object* to be just a combination or fusion of opposites.

> This world order I describe to you throughout as it appears with all its phenomena, in order that no intellect of mortal men may outstrip you. (frag. 8)

> They have established a custom of naming two forms, one of which ought not to be mentioned: that is where they have gone astray. They have distinguished them as opposite in form, and have marked them off from another by giving them different signs. (frag. 8)

> But since all things are named Light and Night, and names have been given to each class of things according to the power of one or the other, everything is full equally of Light and invisible Night, as both are equal, because to neither of them belongs any share of the other. (45)

> You shall know the nature of the heavens, and all the signs in the heavens, and the destructive works of the pure bright torch of the sun, and whence they came into being. And you shall learn of the wandering works of the round-faced moon, and its nature; and you shall know also the surrounding heaven, whence it sprang and how necessity brought and constrained it to hold the limit of the stars. (frag. 10)

> I will describe how earth and sun and moon, and the aether common to all, and the Milky Way in the heavens, and outermost Olympus, and the hot power of the stars, hastened to come into being. (frag. 11)

> Thus, therefore, according to opinion, were these things created, and are now, and shall hereafter from henceforth grow and then come to an end. And for these things men have established a name as a distinguishing mark for each. (frag. 19)

"Thus, therefore, according to opinion." As the goddess has insisted since the first part of the poem, in ordinary opinions there is 'no true reliability' (frag. 1). In Parmenides' poem, one thing finally unsettles the goddess above all else: the ordinary mortals' naming of perishable objects in accordance with the "opposite forms." "Night" and "light" are the opposites that Parmenides has ordained to qualify as the equal origins of every single object. For example, if this Night to which the goddess refers is *Hesiod*'s Night, that is, Vengeful Justice, then it would indicate that this Night can never again be officially spoken of except insofar as it is also the opposite of Night. The very conception would be annihilated.

This motif is no doubt meant to indicate a general educational program whereby the opposites, which ordinary speakers refuse to mix, *must* be mixed. The goddess talks, in the doxa, about how she will preside over a certain "cruel birth and mating" (frag. 12). It will indeed be a violent mating which predicates hot of cold, injustice of justice, truth of falsehood.

Night, to refer again to Hesiod's *Theogony*, *never* mixes with light. It is not possible that they mix.

> That is where the sources and limits of the dark earth are, and of murky Tartarus, of the barren sea, and of the starry sky, everyone, one after another, distressful, dank, things which even the gods hate: a great chasm, whose bottom one would not reach in a whole long year, once one was inside the gates, but one would be borne hither and thither by one distressful blast after another—it is terrible for the immortal gods as well, this monstrosity; and the terrible houses of dark night stand there, shrouded in black clouds. In front of these, Iapetus' son holds the broad sky with his head and hands, standing immovable, where night and day passing near greet one another as they cross the bronze threshold. The one is about to go in, and the other is going out

> the door, and never does the house hold them both inside, but always one goes out from the house and passes over the earth, while the other in turn remaining inside the house waits for the time of her own departure until it comes. (*Theo*, 736–55)

The traditional Greek gods such as Zeus, in the goddess's regime, are only part of the way of seeming or doxa. "Outermost Olympus" is one of the things said to be generated in the doxa, that is, in the philosophical regime whereby all opposites become identical. "Justice," in the eighth fragment, promises that coming to be and passing away will be held in "fetters": "Nor will the force of credibility ever admit that anything should come into being, beside Being itself, out of not-being. So far as that is concerned, Justice has never released Being in its fetters and set it free either to come into being or to perish, but holds it fast" (frag. 8).

Parmenides' doxa lays it down that all objects are a combination of these two opposites, light and night. Human beings, of course, are among these objects. We therefore must be a mixture of light and night, and both *equally*, as the goddess has insisted. What are we to make of the goddess's next claim, then, when she says that ordinary speakers decide which name to use, based upon whether it is night or light which is the *larger* portion in the mixtures which constitute our limbs? "For according to the mixture of much-wandering limbs which each man has, so is the mind which is associated with mankind: for it is the same thing which thinks, namely the constitution of the limbs in men, all and individually; for it is excess which makes thought" (frag. 16).

Under the cosmological rule that light and night are mixed equally in all objects, there would be no excess that could be spoken of. What basis is there for the use of names at all then? For those who understand the goddess's arguments, the implication certainly must be that the possessor of well-rounded truth can use names howsoever he or she pleases. The ordinary speakers of course will continue to refer to "all things that mortals have established" (44). But under the new regime, the objects to which they refer are reduced to "just a name" (44).

NOTES

1. Kathleen Freeman, *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), Parmenides fragment 1, p. 41. All of the translations of Parmenides' poem in this chapter will be from the Freeman text.

2. Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, ed. Ted Honderich (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), 156. Cf. Jonathan Barnes, "Parmenides and the Eleatic One," *Archiv fur Geschichte der Philosophie* 61 (1979): 13.

3. W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol. 2, *The Presocratic Tradition from Parmenides to Democritus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 25.

4. Werner Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers*, trans. Edward Robinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), 94.
5. David Sedley, "Parmenides and Melissus," in *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy*, ed. A. A. Long (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 117.
6. Barnes, *Presocratic Philosophers*, 162.
7. John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy* (New York: Meridian, 1965), 179.
8. Karl R. Popper, *The World of Parmenides* (London: Routledge, 1998).
9. R. J. Hankinson, "Parmenides and the Metaphysics of Changelessness," in *Presocratic Philosophy: Essays in Honor of Alexander Mourelatos*, ed. Victor Caston and Daniel W. Graham (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002).
10. G. E. L. Owen, "Eleatic Questions," in *Logic, Science and Dialectic: Collected Papers in Greek Philosophy*, ed. Martha Nussbaum (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986).
11. A. P. D. Mourelatos, "Determinacy and Indeterminacy: Being and Non-Being in Parmenides," *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 2 (1976): 45–46.
12. Leonardo Taran, *Parmenides* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965), 37–38.
13. Owen, "Eleatic Questions," 16.
14. Charles Kahn, "The Greek Verb 'to Be' and the Concept of Being," *Foundations of Language* 2 (1966): 245. Alexander Mourelatos presents a similar theory, which he refers to as the use of "to be" for "speculative predication." *The Route of Parmenides* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970), 47–49, 51, 57–58. Cf. Montgomery Furth, "Elements of Eleatic Ontology," in *The Presocratics*, ed. Alexander Mourelatos (New York: Anchor Books, 1974), 242, 243, 247.
15. Charles H. Kahn, "Linguistic Relativism and the Greek Project of Ontology," in *The Question of Being: East-West Perspective*, ed. Mervyn Sprung (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1978), 32.
16. Kahn, "The Greek Verb 'to Be,'" 250–51.
17. Kahn, "The Greek Verb 'to Be,'" 246. Cf. Kahn, "The Thesis of Parmenides," *Review of Metaphysics* 22 (1969): 700–724.
18. Kahn, "Linguistic Relativism," 33.
19. Kahn, "The Greek Verb 'to Be,'" 260.

Chapter Two

Parmenides and the Milesian Philosophies: "Nothing Comes from Nothing"—Physics or Logic?

There is one principle of philosophical insight which exists as a center of gravity for the entire era of pre-Socratic philosophy: "nothing comes from nothing." Parmenides and his many admirers would like to claim this principle and its philosophical implications for the Eleatic alone. However, this principle is an examination of *origins*. The pioneers in the study of origins are the Milesian physicists.

The Milesian's theoretical speculation, according to Aristotle, begins with questions about the material origins of the existing world of generated things. Ordinary thinking is content to accept the perceptible coming-to-be of objects as the first origin of things. People do not, unless particularly motivated, wonder about the origins of those very processes of generation. Is it possible for a generated body to have no prior material origin? Does matter arise for the first time in the very act of generation? The Milesian thinkers did not believe that this could be the case. "Nothing comes from nothing."

The preponderance of modern commentators on ancient Greek philosophy insist to us that Parmenides is the effective founder of the theory that "nothing comes from nothing." This theory, they maintain, is an argument of logic. Owen, Mourelatos, Furth, Stokes, Barnes, and Guthrie all maintain that Parmenides' thesis, "nothing comes from nothing," proves something *about* body in nature.[1] They hold, though, that such arguments about body are inferences from a prior knowledge, a knowledge of logic, unfolded by Parmenides.

They claim, indeed, that Parmenides has proved that coming-to-be can never actually occur. Such a proposition, that generation is an illusion, is

quite a distance from the sort of thinking that the Milesians were doing when they first encountered this insight. For the Milesians did not themselves raise the question of whether generation occurs. What they asked is where the matter involved in generation ultimately comes from, and what this matter might be.

Aristotle's testimony as to the content of the Milesian theories, however, is seriously contested. Many of the commentators say that Aristotle reports the Milesians inaccurately, that he imposes his own Aristotelian theory of causation onto the Milesian physics that he claims to teach us about. This criticism must be met and evaluated, since Aristotle and his student Theophrastus are the two principal sources for our records on the Milesians.

It does not seem possible that Parmenides in any way shares a subject of nature with the Milesians. The question is, rather, who was the founder of the "nothing comes from nothing" formulation? The view we will present in this chapter is that the Milesians were the founders of this argument, and that in the case of the Milesians, the "nothing comes from nothing" argument is perfectly comfortable with real generation and the qualitative alteration of natural objects.

THE NATURAL PHILOSOPHERS

The first discoverers of the insight that nothing comes from nothing were not investigators into the operations of logic. The first discoverers of this principle, in Aristotle's view, were motivated by the attempt to escape from an ignorance or defect in themselves. Aristotle calls this state of mind "wonder," and in this definition he links the theological poets and the natural philosophers, for both labored under this same desire to overcome ignorance.[2]

This argument of Aristotle is in truth the one that has excited so much turbulence regarding his historiography among the most recent scholarship on the pre-Socratic period. For the ignorance which Aristotle identifies as the source of the inquiry in the natural philosophers is one which fuses together the enterprise of science and ordinary opinion. The ordinary opiners, to be sure, may not feel compelled to understand the origins of the perishable world, but the natural philosophers who did feel so compelled began their inquiry from the otherwise ordinary state of knowledge: opinions about the perishables.

This theory of knowledge which Aristotle ascribes to the natural philosophers, such that an explanation for the most easily and commonly known things is the Milesian starting point, is radically at loggerheads with the later Parmenidean thesis. In Parmenides' investigation, any dependence on a cer-

tain knowledge of the reality of the perishables, as a preliminary premise for inquiry into eternal natural reality, is denied. For, at least in the *Way of Truth*, the reality of the eternal is proffered to the reader as the opposite, that is, the negation, of the reality of the perishables. "Further, it is changeless in the coils of huge bonds, without beginning or cessation, since becoming and perishing have strayed very far away, thrust back by authentic conviction."[3]

Aristotle himself relies on a theory of how knowledge is obtained among human beings which starts with sense perception. The model of knowledge which he regards as true for all human beings who think begins with sensory knowledge of particulars that does not involve intellect, strictly speaking.[4] Intellectual inquiry is then conducted with the assistance of memory of sensible perceptions, and it is something which makes abstraction from the sense particulars.

Parmenides' principles of knowledge appear to leave no such bridge between the ordinary opinions and scientific knowledge. For the questions which can arise from wonderment at ordinary knowledge cannot possibly involve a rejection of the reality of the things most ordinarily known. To move to a higher or more abstract knowledge of the sensible particulars in the manifold world will not, and does not, involve a cancellation of the reality of the sense particulars for the mind which Aristotle sketches for us as the prototypically human one.

We will proceed here to take up the scholarship which investigates the Milesian natural philosophers. This scholarship, for a very long time indeed, (at least from the time of Francis Bacon[5]), says that Aristotle is doing violence to the actual theories which he claims to report. Aristotle, Harold Cherniss says, whether for reasons of mental prejudice or intellectual defect, is in the habit of projecting his own special theories of physics onto the Milesians, whose theories he reports. "Such was Aristotle's feeling for the history of philosophy that he could impute to Thales and his followers an argument which presupposes the peculiarly Aristotelian doctrines of equilibrium of opposites and natural places; and such was either his contempt for them or his lack of insight into the implications of his own theories that it seems not to have occurred to him that, had any man thought of that argument, he could not have set up an infinite sensible body at all."[6]

In other words, Aristotle's investigation into the natural philosophers is called vehemently into question on the issue of generation as he reports it to have been thought upon by the first natural philosophers. This really is another variation of the same distinction which we have been investigating between Parmenides' logical derivation of the "nothing comes from nothing" principle, and the Milesian physicists' quest for origins based on the sure knowledge of the perishable, sensed particulars.

The Milesian philosophers, these scholars say, even though nature was their focus rather than logic per se, also did not believe in generation as

Aristotle describes it. The true belief of the Milesian philosophers, William Heidel[7] and Cherniss argue, is that the matter of the natural world does not, in truth, undergo qualitative change either. They say that the actual Milesian view is one of mixture and segregation of indestructible particles. Aristotle, they say, keeps imposing his own theory of a matter that undergoes change onto the Milesians. "It is a result of Aristotle's constant tendency to interpret mechanical combinations and segregation whenever the process occurs as a halting attempt to view all precosmical mixtures as an approach to his own potential matter."[8] In the argument which Heidel and Cherniss ascribe to Anaximander, matter itself has become ungenerated in all of its realities: the matter in the perishable objects, in this argument, is only apparently perishable. What really perishes, in this view, is only that which never actually existed in truth. Once again, we are left with a theory which would claim that the knowledge of science is only about bodies which are themselves eternal.

The questioning of Aristotle's reports as to what the Milesian theories simply are is quite a far-reaching one. Theophrastus, Aristotle's student, who compiled a record of the natural philosophers, is subjected to the same variety of criticism due to the influence which Aristotle had on him. Theophrastus too, it is argued, could not keep his own prejudices separate from the theorists whose arguments he reports. "The conclusion is unavoidable," John B. McDiarmid argued; "what Theophrastus has done is apply to the Ionians individually what Aristotle has asserted of them as a group" (98). "Their interpretation clearly presupposes that he had subscribed to the specifically Aristotelian notion of the equilibrium of the contraries and the genesis of the four simple bodies through the interaction of the contraries on undifferentiated matter" (99).[9]

This argument has been accepted for true by very noted scholars, including Kirk, Raven, Schofield,[10] and Francis M. Cornford: "Misled by Aristotle's habit of regarding his predecessors as more or less imperfectly anticipating one of his own four causes (material, formal, moving and final), the older historians of philosophy accepted his view that the early Ionians were concerned only with 'principles of a material kind', such as water or air. Accordingly they were represented as putting to themselves the question: what is the one material substance of which all things consist?"[11]

Anaximander is the natural philosopher who has served as the lightning rod for this criticism of Aristotle in modern scholarship. Anaximander, it is agreed, was a natural philosopher from Miletus, who was trained under Thales. In turn, Anaximenes was a pupil of Anaximander. Thales, according to Aristotle, started this school of philosophy. He began to inquire into the natural origins of the perceptible world. Thales thought that all things must originally come from, and at some point return into, water.

Aristotle describes the Ionian school, which Thales began, in his *Metaphysics* at 983b6–18: "Of the first philosophers, most thought the principles

which were of the nature of matter were the only principles of all things: that out of which all things that are consist, and from which they first come to be, and into which they are finally resolved (the substance remaining, but changing in its modifications); this they say is the element and the principle of things, and therefore they think nothing is either generated or destroyed, since this sort of entity is always conserved, as we say Socrates neither comes to be absolutely when he comes to be beautiful or musical, nor ceases to be when he loses these characteristics, because the substratum, Socrates himself, remains. So they say nothing else comes to be or ceases to be; for there must be some entity—either one or more than one—from which all other things come to be, it being conserved."

Certain things need to be made clear about the above passage. According to Aristotle, the Milesians, as natural philosophers, were concerned about the world of change. This means the sensible world and the things seen to be generated and to perish. Based on their lack of predecessors, Aristotle holds, the Ionian analysis did not proceed much beyond material origins. There must be, these philosophers thought, as Aristotle conveys it to us, some matter out of which the perishable world originates. The Milesians, Aristotle continues, attempted to define that material origin.

The relationship between the material principle, eternal origin of perishable matter, and the perishables, is one of alteration according to Aristotle's analysis of the Milesians. This is to say that the Milesians, discovering the dependence of perishable objects on some source of matter which is not itself destructible, did not succeed in discovering a more substantial theory of coming-to-be. For Thales, in this way, the perishable world is thought to arise from the material element of water; for Anaximenes, the third Milesian, from air; and for Anaximander, the second Milesian, the material principle was called unlimited or "apeiron."

The limit of the Milesian inquiry, as Aristotle investigates it, is that their own research did not get much beyond the question of material origin. The theory that matter alone is the substance of generated objects thus leaves a blurred line between the eternal matter and the perishables. If water, that is, becomes the other perishable objects, and the perishable objects return into water eventually, then the conception of a purposeful generated existence is quite diluted. There is not even any comment at all, from Aristotle, to the effect that that the Milesians failed to believe in natural change. For Parmenides held this view, and Aristotle opposed his argument as actually irrelevant for an inquiry into nature.[12] It is the kind of change which the Milesians find in nature that Aristotle finds to be deficient, but he does not find their theories to be deficient in any way which suggests perversity in their viewpoints. It was simply as far as their own theories had advanced, Aristotle reasons, and he recognizes the dependence of his own arguments on the advances made by the Milesians.

Alteration, in Aristotle's analysis, is a theory of change which satisfactorily describes a hot drink changing into a cold one; or an ice cube changing into water; or the student who, obtaining teaching and learning, becomes knowledgeable. This form of change, in Aristotle's view, is not satisfactory for describing the generation of a natural object, such as the birth of a child or the germination of a seedling into a plant. The theory of alteration does not reach these decisive, more far-reaching and complex changes that coming-to-be involves, in Aristotle's view. Alteration involves changes in things that have already been in existence, whereas coming-to-be involves the change from not-being into being.

This, in any event, is the trajectory of Aristotle's criticism of the Milesian philosophers. This is quite obscured by the direction of the criticism which modern scholars aim at Aristotle's historiography. For Cherniss, Heidel, McDiarmid, and Cornford, Aristotle is importing a theory of change into scientific theories which are alleged, now, to have none. The material principle which Aristotle reports of the Milesians is one where the original matter alters into different objects and other forms of perishable matter. It is the change, even as mere alteration, which the modern scholarship denies to exist among the Milesian philosophers. For in the view of the modern scholarship, the Milesians believed in material particles which are themselves irreducible and unchangeable: the only change which they are capable of, as Cherniss says, is that the particles mix and blend differently, as marbles in a jar might, should one insert a finger and move it around.

William Heidel describes the natural philosophers in this vein. "There are, strictly speaking, only two periods in the history of occidental philosophy, the pre-Socratic and the Socratic. The first took external nature as its point of departure, and fixed for all time the fundamental conceptions of physical processes. Even where considered biological and intellectual processes, it started with mechanical notions and arrived in the end at materialistic conclusions" (116). "Hence all change is secondary, an epiphenomena of mixture or recomposition effected by effluences from one thing entering into the pores of another."[13]

The theory which Heidel is describing above, where change is an "epiphenomena," is not like change as alteration which Aristotle ascribes to the Milesians. In the view which Aristotle ascribes to Thales, water does indeed alter into fire and air. According to epiphenomena as Heidel is talking about them above, no particle of matter undergoes so much as alteration. Different particles, themselves as changeless as Parmenides' eternal unity, would simply move into "pores" or different void spaces. This rather Democritean theory of nature, according to Heidel, is in the Milesians, well before the Parmenidean argument was developed and considered by others.

This really is the nub of the dispute between Aristotle's historical reports on the Milesians and the modern scholars' attacks on the accuracy of that

record. The issue is whether, in the view of the Milesians, specifically Anaximander, matter in nature undergoes any internal change at all. It is not the distinction between alteration of an existing being, on the one hand, and coming-to-be versus passing away on the other, which our modern scholars have in view when they look at Aristotle's record of the Milesians: it is rather the difference between Democritean atomism, and matter as undergoing alteration, which repeatedly emerges, in substance if not in labeling, in the secondary literature. Anaximander, as the most important representative of the Milesian school, they say, did not have a theory of matter such that even mere alteration is possible. For alteration is still real change, but rearrangement of stable, unchangeable particles, is not alteration.

Cherniss applies this theory to Anaximander. "The belief that the qualitative difference of bodies must be based upon primary and irreducible elemental qualities is the formulation of all attempts to explain generation by the reorganization of elemental bodies having only quantitative distinctions" (8). "It is clear that Anaximander's 'separation' was no condensation or rarefaction and that neither his contraries nor those of any of the Presocratics were a single set of opposed agencies, but an indefinite number of physical ingredients" (109).[14]

Cherniss gives a still clearer view of the modern reinterpretation of Anaximander. "Apeiron," the original material principle in Anaximander's theory, is described by Cherniss as a diverse mixture of discrete particles. Apeiron, in other words, is not a unity which undergoes change of alteration; it is rather a confused mixture of different particles which, thereafter, is differently sorted such that apparent order is produced. The material particles themselves, again, do not undergo alteration in Cherniss's presentation: "For Anaximander the apeiron was simply a boundless expanse of infinitely different ingredients so thoroughly mixed together as to be severally indiscernible in the mixture, but which when segregated from the mixture are recognizable as all the differences of an articulated world."[15] "A passage derived from Theophrastus proves that Anaximander refrained from specifying further the nature of this reservoir of all existing things; but the designation that he chose for it, the adjective apeiron substantivized by the definite article, since it has the appearance of an abstraction, made it easy for Theophrastus to follow Aristotle and despite his better knowledge, taking to apeiron in Aristotle's sense as an 'arche,' as a 'principle' or 'element' rather than in Anaximander's of 'source' or 'reservoir,' to interpret it in terms of Aristotelian prime matter as the substrate which is the indeterminate potentiality of all the properties, none of which it has actually" (325). "The significance of the fact that Anaximander called his arche simply to apeiron without further specification or restriction is not that limitlessness or infinity exhausts its nature but that it is unlimited without restriction, unlimited in every sense of the Greek word, in extent, in multitude, and in kind. In short not that it is

potentially everything being actually nothing but infinity, as the peripatetic interpretation would have it, but that it is everything in actuality" (325).

That which is "everything in actuality" leaves no place for any kind of change, not even for alteration. One can say, for the purposes of addressing Cherniss and Heidel, that the major concern of Aristotle's vis-à-vis the Milesians is not even under consideration. Aristotle, who wished to amend the theory of natural philosophy to include more profound theories of change as in coming-to-be, is opposed by Cherniss on the grounds that he finds any internal change in matter whatsoever in the Milesian theory.

It may be said here, briefly, that Cherniss and Heidel wish to make Democritus the prototype for all of the pre-Socratic theories. The physics of Democritus, as all agree, was heavily affected by the argument of Parmenides. All also agree that the Milesians came before Parmenides' argument had been developed and advertised. When Heidel and Cherniss are arguing that Democritean, ungenerated material particles are at the root of Milesian science, they are once again doing away with the ascent of knowledge from ordinary, sense particulars to universals. For the ordinary sensibles are not the manifestation of changeless particles, but rather all perceptible objects first come into being, and eventually perish. The language which is used by Anaximander in the one surviving fragment we have of his is redefined as a mere illusion based on the Democritean point of view. In the physics which the revisionists wish to impose upon the Milesians, knowledge of the perishables is not certain knowledge, much less the starting point for wonder and the encounter with ignorance.

It is useful to end this section as we began it, talking about the questions which the Milesians asked themselves and what they signify. Cherniss and Cornford wish to argue that Aristotle has imported some rare curiosity of his own unusual philosophy onto the Milesians. The Milesians, these scholars insist, did not share Aristotle's concerns. But Aristotle, for his part, does not claim that his own curiosity is distinct from the impulses of ordinary opinion. Except where pressing necessities bear down on men and women in such a way that they have no liberty to contemplate the matter of origins in detail and length, Aristotle believes, the inclination to wish to know of such origins is a universal human quality. Just as Aristotle argues that the theological poets such as Hesiod give substance to a universal human desire to know, so too does he see the natural philosophers as pursuing inquiries which are latent at least in all breasts.

Aristotle, in other words, denies that scientific knowledge has any other original material than what is known to all men and women, philosophers and nonphilosophers alike. What is real to the ordinary opinion must be real to authentic science as well, from Aristotle's viewpoint. This is not the perspective of Parmenides and Democritus, both of whom deny the ordinary knowledge of the sensibles. This dispute over the origins of scientific knowl-

edge is, it seems to me, the true reason for the animus directed against Aristotle in his discussion of the natural philosophers. Cherniss and Heidel assert a Parmenidean foundation for scientific thought which Aristotelian science opposes in an unqualified way. The resolution of that dispute cannot occur until it is made clear but this is not the place for that inquiry.

ANAXIMANDER'S OPPOSITES

The issue immediately before us, then, should be clarified. The Milesian natural philosophers offered theories about the material origins of nature. According to Aristotle, that theory is one of alteration: with Thales, water is said to be the origin, which in turn alters into fire, air, and the other things. For Anaximenes, Anaximander's student, air is the material principle, which is moved by processes of cooling and heating to alter into the other elements. Most of the recent commentators ascribe a theory of particle mixture, with no alteration save for an illusory apparent one, to all three Milesian thinkers.

The source material that scholars rely upon to investigate the work of Anaximander is to a large degree from Simplicius. Simplicius, in turn, is thought to have obtained his evidence for Anaximander's theories from a contaminated source, Aristotle's student Theophrastus. In any event, let us look at the statements which Simplicius makes as pertains to Anaximander:

> Of those who say that it is one, moving, and infinite, Anaximander, son of Praxiades, a Milesian, the successor and pupil of Thales, said that the principle and element of existing things was the apeiron (indefinite, or infinite) being the first to introduce this name of the material principle. He says that it is neither water nor any other of the so-called elements, but some other apeiron nature, from which come into being all the heavens and the worlds in them. And the source of coming to be for existing things is that into which destruction, too, happens "according to necessity; for they pay penalty and retribution to each other for their injustice according to the assessment of time," as he describes it in these rather poetical terms.[16]

Hippolytus is another source for Anaximander's theory. "Now Anaximander was the disciple of Thales, Anaximander, son of Praxiades, of Miletus . . . he said that the principle and element of existing things was the apeiron, being the first to use this name of the material principle. (In addition to this he said that motion was eternal, in which it results that the heavens come into being) . . . he said that the material principle of existing things was some nature coming under the heading of apeiron, from which come into being the heavens and the world in them. This nature is eternal and unageing, and it also surrounds all the worlds. He talks of time as though coming-to-be and destruction were limited. . . . He talks of time."[17]

A third source for Anaximander's theory is Ps.-Plutarch: "Anaximander, who was the companion of Thales, said that the apeiron contained the whole cause of coming-to-be and destruction of the world, from which he says that the heavens are separated off, and in general all the worlds, being apeiorous (innumerable). He declared that destruction, and much earlier coming-to-be, happen from infinite ages, since they are all occurring in cycles."[18]

All of these records as to Anaximander's thought are believed to derive originally from Theophrastus. It is worth noting that none of these records leave any doubt, of themselves, that there is a theory of change in Anaximander which at the very least encompasses alteration of matter, or the "arche." Cherniss's theory, and Heidel's theory of a "reservoir" where everything material already actually exists, cannot be derived from the previous passages.

However, there is a passage in Aristotle's *Physics* which these scholars seize upon. One can observe that, right off the bat, it must seem rather dubious to be gathering, as moths to a flame, around Aristotle's record of Anaximander, by scholars who have indicted his competence and integrity in those passages which do not suit their theories. Nevertheless, let us follow the discourse to the passage from Aristotle, at *Physics* (187a):

> The physicists on the other hand have two modes of explanation. The first set make the underlying body one—either one of the three or something else which is denser than fire and rarer than air—then generate everything else from this, and obtain multiplicity by condensation and rarefaction. (Now these are contraries, which may be generalized into excess and defect. Compare Plato's "great and small"—except that he makes these his matter, the one his form, while the others treat the one which underlies as matter and the contraries as differentia, i.e. the forms.) The second set assert that the contrarieties are contained in the one and emerge from it by segregation, for example Anaximander and also all those who assert that what is is one and many, like Empedocles and Anaxagoras; for they too produce other things from their mixture by segregation. These differ, however, from each other in that the former imagines a cycle of such changes, the latter a single series. Anaxagoras again made both his homogenous substances and his contraries infinite, whereas Empedocles posits only the so-called elements.

The decisive phrase above is "the contrarieties are contained in the one." What does Aristotle mean by the phrase "contrarieties are contained in the one," when he describes the group of physicists which include Anaximander? The reason why Aristotle groups Anaximander with Anaxagoras and Empedocles will be taken up in the next chapter. For the present, we are concerned with the meaning of "contrarieties" and "contained." It is by virtue of this passage in Aristotle that more modern scholars undertake to argue that Anaximander's theory is one of the reservoir of material particles which do

not undergo alteration themselves, but are rather moved about or jostled like marbles in a bowl.

There is no disputing that the sentence is in Aristotle. By "contrarieties," does Aristotle mean condensation and rarefaction? If he did, then the contrarieties would indicate hot and cold as qualities in the substrate which in turn precipitate alteration as the Anaximandrian theory of coming-to-be as alteration.[19] What would be the result, however, if by contrarieties, Aristotle meant opposed particles, or opposed matters? Simplicius, in his commentary on Aristotle's passage, claims that Aristotle meant by contrarieties things like "the cold and the hot, the dry and the wet." To our ears, certainly, cold and hot, dry and wet are qualities or predications made about some underlying object, not themselves bodies. However, a considerable tide of scholarly opinion has argued that to the Milesians, who belonged to an archaic Greek consciousness, "cold" and "hot" indicate bodies, that is, matter, not qualities of matter.

A road is opened to the theory of nature where matter does not undergo even alteration, if it can be plausibly proved that Anaximander's "apeiron" had in it preexisting particles. This would remove the proof that the apeiron undergoes alteration into the other forms of matter; it would provide evidence, in other words, that matter does not undergo even alteration in Anaximander's theory. It would mean, then, that Anaximander's theory of matter is like Democritus's, that matter is ungenerated and imperishable and inalterable in truth and reality. It would mean, in other words, the lifting of natural philosophy into the theater of Parmenides' changeless universe, and also the one where ordinary opinions do not provide the original evidence for the scientific investigations of the intellect.

First, how many scholars do believe that the "contrarieties" mentioned in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* indicated, *to Aristotle*, bodies rather than qualities? Very few.[20] Aristotle, since he had learned the philosophical distinction between substance and predicate from Plato, these scholars hold, himself well knew the distinction. However, they hold that Anaximander, should he have used the word "contrarieties" himself, would not have known the distinction between noun and predicate. To Anaximander, they say, "contrarieties" such as hot and cold would indicate, not qualities in opposition, but bodies in opposition.

According to their theory, Aristotle has imposed his own philosophical theories on the prior natural philosophers, including in this case. Aristotle indicates predicates by "contrarieties" when he classifies Anaximander, but Anaximander is improperly so interpreted, they say, for he would not have had a consciousness of the distinction between noun and predicate. McDiarmid supplies a succinct account of this view:

> The effect of this is that all the early thinkers are represented as sharing Aristotle's analytical and abstract concern with matter. Lack of firsthand evidence from the writings of the early physicists prevents the complete resolution of doubts that may be held about the view of matter that Aristotle attributes to them. . . . With regard to the concept of matter that he attributes to them however there can be no doubt. This concept rests on the combination of two ideas: the definition of identity and difference as formulated in consequence of Eleatic logic, and the distinction between subject and attribute as developed first by Socrates and Plato. It is, therefore, an obvious historical impossibility that any presocratic should have held this concept. If Thales did say that all things come from water, he cannot have meant that water is a principle in the sense that Aristotle and Theophrastus use the word. The entire doxographical tradition about his principle is, thus, spoiled at its source by an anachronism, an anachronism that becomes more deceptive for being removed from its original context. (91–92)[21]

Heidel makes the argument as follows: "The question at issue is, in the last analysis, whether primitive man conceived of qualities as abstract, or as material constituents of things" (343). "Now, if we inquire just what Anaximander had in mind, the most plausible answer appears to be this: he held the naïve opinion that a substance . . . may possess various 'qualities,' and that those qualities really are in that object in the form of ingredients, possibly so confused and blended that none assumes a considerable prominence" (345).[22]

Cornford makes a similar interpretation of Anaximander. Apeiron, in the view advanced by Cornford, is not a material origin which undergoes alteration. Rather, it is like Cherniss's "reservoir." All material reality, divided into separate particles, is ungenerated in this theory, and this is ascribed by Cornford to Anaximander: "The opposites, then, were at first contained in the original unity and subsequently emerged into distinctness. If there is assumed to be no absolute beginning of existence, the opposites must have been in the unity before they could come out of it. What were these opposites? Simplicius specifies 'hot, cold, moist, dry and the rest.' The important point about them is that they are not qualities, but things. 'The hot' was not warmth, considered as an adjectival property of some substance which is warm. It is a substantive thing, and 'the cold,' its contrary, is another thing" (162).[23] W. K. C. Guthrie accepts this argument. "When Anaximander first tried to give philosophical expression to the idea, no clear distinction was possible between substance and attribute. Just as he spoke of the 'boundless,' so he designated the opposites by article and adjective as the hot, the cold, the wet and the dry. These, as Cornford has said, are for Anaximander not qualities but things. 'The hot' was not warmth, considered as an adjectival property of some substance which is warm. It is a substantive thing, and 'the cold,' its contrary, is another thing" (80–81).[24]

The strongest foundation for the argument, then, that Anaximander's apeiron is not a theory of matter which undergoes internal alteration, but is rather a mixture of preexisting particles which are limited to rearrangement or local motions of their own, comes to balance on this account in Aristotle's *Physics*. Aristotle, these scholars claim, ascribed a theory to Anaximander, that is, the distinction between substance and attribute, which Anaximander could not have possessed. Aristotle had had to learn this distinction between substance and attribute from Plato, in this account.

This argument, however, is committing gross fallacies. First, the theory of "substance," as in Plato's theory of the forms, or as in Aristotle's very different theory of compounds of matter and form, is indeed a highly complex philosophical theory. It would be absurd to maintain that Anaximander had any theory such as that of Plato's forms, or of Aristotle's substances. Aristotle never makes such a claim.

The distinction between noun and predicate, as between "hot" and "apple pie," is something that these scholars are ascribing to Plato as an invention of some sort. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle would all find this proposition equally silly. The distinction between noun and predicate is one which, the Socratics believe, is inherent in the basic form of human speech, such that human beings cannot manage to articulate any proposition whatsoever without combining these two unlike grammatical elements. Now, the ability of philosophy to raise knowledge of this aspect of human thought and speech is something that can quite probably be said to originate with Socrates. However, the notion that, in their own statements, the Milesians would be practically or effectually unacquainted with this distinction between subject and predicate, such that they indicated "nouns" when they appear to be employing "verbs," would be to indicate that they themselves were not bound by the forms of speech which Plato and Aristotle (correctly) claim are eternal realities of human conception and communication.

The theorists who attack Aristotle for his account of the Milesians are opposed to him principally because he makes scientific knowledge beholden to ordinary sensible experience. It is Aristotle's firm anchoring of philosophical knowledge in the evidence collected by the nonintellectual, sensible particulars, and the cementing together of ordinary human consciousness to philosophical endeavor, that has raised this mighty tide of opposition and indictment of his competence as an historiographer of pre-Socratic philosophy. It is this determination to assert some knowledge of imperishable matter as if one did not have to ascend to such knowledge from a starting point of certain knowledge of perishable objects that is the true object of contention in this great disenchantment with Aristotle. The issue truly being fought out, however, should not be obscured, to the point that it is lost from view. In that case, we would never be able to resolve it adequately, seeing as how we would not know truly what the dispute was actually about in the first place.

"THEY PAY PENALTY AND RETRIBUTION"

One crucial aspect of Aristotle's actual investigations into pre-Socratic philosophy involves his own conception of the enterprise. Since Aristotle believed that he, along with the natural philosophers, the Pythagoreans and the Platonists, were all attempting to understand the world given to human beings as human beings, rather than as esoteric philosophers, it is from this posture that he so often launches into criticism of other thinkers for failing to match their theory to truth. It is a fact that, for Aristotle, not only he himself but the other philosophers were trying to make sense of their common world. They did so, according to Aristotle, as human beings who were attempting to escape from ignorance, and the relationship between mortality and the eternal, as it became a scientific enterprise, can hardly be said to leave ordinary opinion behind itself in terms of concernments. Human beings who lack a philosophical understanding of generation are disposed to regard passing away as the greatest of evils, and therefore, scientific investigations into coming-to-be and passing away as themselves natural, which would have profound implications for culture and civilization. Reason would have the potential power to greatly alleviate the terrors of death, in proportion as it became able to comprehend the natural, although limited career of mortal existences.

The enterprise which the majority of commentators would ascribe to the Milesians certainly bears no relationship to ordinary wonder. This is particularly evident as regards the interpretation of that fragment from Anaximander, preserved by Simplicius. To repeat that fragment: "He says that it is neither water nor any other of the so-called elements, but some other apeiron nature, from which come into being all the heavens and the worlds in them. And the source of coming to be for existing things is that into which destruction, too, happens 'according to necessity; for they pay penalty and retribution to one another for their injustice according to the assessment of time,' as he describes it in these rather poetical terms."

We should first inquire into the reason for the theory of the apeiron, or indefinite, itself. Why did Anaximander decline to make water, like Thales, or air, like Anaximenes, into his arche? The answer given by Aristotle, and readily accepted by most commentators, is because Anaximander had grasped that the simple natural bodies all change into one another. If one of these natural bodies (water, air, or fire—since none of them thought earth could be the material origin—although some believed an element "intermediate" between the simple bodies might suffice) was actually the material origin of the others, then it would not be possible for the derivative natural bodies to survive. If water was stronger than the other simple bodies, all

would become water and stay water. And so on for the other versions of this theory of eternal matter undergoing alteration.[25]

"Apeiron," then, separates the material origin from the simple bodies of water, air, and fire. Now, if "apeiron" were a "reservoir" in the sense given by Cherniss, then what exactly would apeiron be? If it already contained water, air, and fire, rather than generating them through alteration, why not simply have water, air, and fire be an original triad? Empedocles, who came after the Parmenidean philosophical moment, considered it his great innovation to make the four simple bodies (air, fire, water, earth) all indestructible matters in their own right. Aristotle well knew of Empedocles' theory. Why would he claim, for the apeiron, some "infinite" matter which is not one of the simple bodies?

There is no doubt that, in Aristotle's view, Anaximander developed the theory of "apeiron" as a form of matter distinct from the simple bodies. It is also clear that he denies the plausibility of this theory. For, if there is another form of matter alongside fire, air, and water (or earth), then this would become perceptible to human beings when a perishable object dissolved into its elements. But no such matter is seen to be left behind when the other simple bodies have disintegrated, and therefore, according to Aristotle, there is no other such intermediate or other form of matter besides the simple bodies commonly known.[26]

In Aristotle's own theory, there is indeed something called "primary matter," which is certainly distinct from the simple bodies. Indeed, Cherniss argues that Aristotle wishes to recruit Anaximander's theory as a forerunner of his own theory of primary matter. There is a grain of truth in this, but not in the way that Cherniss indicates. For Aristotle, the simple natural bodies themselves are, all of them, generated and perishable. They all come into being and pass out of being. However, primary matter is not generated and it is not destructible. To that degree, and to that degree alone, Aristotle's primary matter is like Anaximander's apeiron.

The thing is that "apeiron" itself undergoes alteration, through the hot and the cold, to generate the simple bodies in Anaximander's theory. The eternal matter participates, itself, directly in the production of the simple natural bodies. In Aristotle's theory, primary matter has no such power. In fact, primary matter, eternal matter, is "non being" in Aristotle's theory. It does not contain, within itself, the power to possess being or to produce being. For by itself, primary matter in Aristotle's theory is non-being, as indeed, are the forms.

At issue presently is the meaning of Anaximander's fragment, where he talks about justice and "reparation." In betwixt which parties is there aggression, and injustice, such that reparation is necessary? The literature has been pretty settled in this matter, as to which are the participants in this struggle

that involves justice and "retribution." They say that it is none other than the four simple bodies which are in conflict: earth, water, air, and fire.

This argument is considerably older than Gregory Vlastos's version of it, but Vlastos is perhaps the best known today. John Burnet made a similar argument: "Anaximander taught, then, that there was an eternal, indestructible something out of which everything arises, and into which everything returns; a boundless stock from which the waste of existence is continually made good" (53). "Anaximander started, it would seem, from the strife between the opposites which go to make up the world, the warm was opposed to the cold, the dry to the wet. These were at war, and any predominance of one over the other was an 'injustice' for which they must make reparation at the appointed time" (54). "It is to one another that whatever the subject of the verb may be make reparation and give satisfaction, and therefore the injustice must be a wrong which they commit against one another" (54n1).[27] Guthrie endorses Burnet's argument. "Thus whether the sentence 'things perish into those things out of which they have their being, according to necessity' is also Anaximander's or is a paraphrase by Theophrastus or Simplicius, it cannot refer (as it has frequently been thought to do) to the primal generation of the opposites out of, and final reabsorption into, the ultimate apeiron, but only to their mutual transformation in the present order." "Perishing does not mean vanishing into nothingness, but changing into a different form of matter. This circularity, symbolized by Anaximander as the alternation of 'injustice' and 'reparation,' seems to have been central in his thought" (84–85).[28]

Cornford makes the argument in the following way. "The second point is the hostility or 'opposition' of the elements, which, when they have become distinct, are engaged in perpetual warfare, preying on one another and 'paying to one another the penalty of their injustice according to the order of time.' Air (or mist) is cold; fire is hot; water is moist; earth dry. These two pairs of opposites may be called (in later language) the essential properties of the elements, or, as the early philosophers said, their 'powers,' in virtue of which they act upon one another and are acted upon in their characteristic behavior" (162).[29]

Vlastos preserves most of the foregoing theory, but he also adds some things. Vlastos too relies on Aristotle to prove Anaximander's appreciation of the equal strength of the simple bodies, and hence to explain why none of them can be the material origin of the others. "The argument in Physics 204b 24–29 takes us beyond this aesthetic presumption into physical reasoning: if one of the opposites were boundless, it would not only mar the architectonic elegance of cosmology but would positively destroy the other opposites. Why so? Because—as we know from fragment 1, the opposites are constantly encroaching upon one another. If one of them were limitless, there would be no stopping it by the rest, singly or in combination, for they are all limited. Its encroachment would continue until the rest were destroyed" (169).[30]

Anaximander used the language of justice, according to Vlastos, to describe the combat between the four simple bodies. "The early Greek notion of justice lends itself with seductive ease to application far beyond the bounds of politics and morals. To respect the nature of anyone or anything is to be 'just' to them. To impair or destroy that nature is 'violence' or 'injustice'" (156). "Cosmic equality was conceived as the guaranty of cosmic justice: the order of nature is maintained because it is an order of equals" (156).

There can be no doubt that the Greek conception of justice, as every civilization's conception of justice, involves an idea of equality. Certainly, those who would be accused of injustice, and those to whom reparation must be paid, must inescapably be linked by bonds of equality in the idea of justice in question. However, it is strikingly odd that Vlastos should characterize this "equality" as one of power: for it is the opposite of the truth that ordinary conceptions of justice, or Greek theories of justice, are based upon the proposition that only equals in power can be aggressed against.[31] To the contrary, equality in the area of justice more ordinarily involves a declamation against the strong who have used their strength unjustly against the weaker. Not power, but justice as the corrector of imbalances in power, is the notion of equality commonly understood. To make power the operative conception of justice, as Vlastos appears to do here, is to make all claims of justice obliged to the individual powers of those who would advance claims. It would be tantamount to holding that justice is synonymous with strength: that the just is simply whatever one's own powers and influence can bring to pass. This certainly describes something like the relationship between the simple bodies of earth, water, air, and fire, but this is hardly anything that Anaximander would conceive of as in any way related to political or juridical ideas of justice or reparation.

Furthermore, in order for justice to make sense as a metaphor, it would seem necessary that something perishable and of value is at least potentially to be lost. In the theory where the four simple bodies are equally strong and only change their form into one another in equal measures, what would justice and injustice mean? If nature had ordained that no human being could be hurt in any lasting way, but that the strong would become weak next spring, and the weak strong, and able to repair whatever transient injuries had been sustained, then the comparison between the four elements and the equality of justice would make sense, as laid down by Vlastos.

Anaximander, we know, understood that the simple bodies were equally strong. Unlike human beings in the polis, that is. His apeiron theory is drafted in order to accommodate the observed reality that no one of the simple bodies is stronger than the others; it is not an attempt to impose upon nature some order that it does not otherwise have.

The injustice to which Anaximander refers, then, cannot be the relationship between the four simple bodies.[32] For where no injury is possible to be

sustained, nor advantage to be gained, no justice is needed. It brings us back once more to the relationship between the perishable world and the eternal world, which is the one that best tracks with the disposition of wonder that Aristotle claims for, not only himself, but for the natural philosophers, the Pythagoreans, and the Platonists. One hopes that scholars will not argue that, until Plato's *Apology*, no prior "archaic" Greeks had recognized the distinction between a mortal career and passing away, in the manner that they have argued that the pre-Platonists lacked a sense of distinction between noun and verb.

Mortal life, seen from the vantage point of Anaximander's physics, indicates a newfound understanding of the obligation of the perishable to the "deathless and imperishable." Human beings, as perishable, owe a debt to their origins from the eternal; part of that debt will be respect for what is perishable, and a reformed attitude toward passing away which is within the bounds of nature.

Aristotle describes Anaximander's apeiron as "to encompass all and to steer all," as "divine."[33] The "steering" apeiron, then, which "intends all," indicates a purposeful origin for the perishables. It would be to do it an injustice to rave against all passing away, and for the gift of generation, reparation must ultimately be paid. This aspect is indeed something which both Plato and Aristotle preserve in their own theories.

NOTES

1. G. E. L. Owen, "Eleatic Questions," in *Logic, Science and Dialectic: Collected Papers in Greek Philosophy*, ed. Martha Nussbaum (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 6; Alexander P. D. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970), 7; Montgomery Furth, "Elements of Eleatic Ontology," in *The Pre-Socratics: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Alexander P. D. Mourelatos (New York: Anchor, 1974), 249, 267; Michael C. Stokes, *One and Many in Presocratic Philosophy* (Washington, DC: Center for Hellenic Studies; distributed by Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1971), 132; Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1982), 169; W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 2, *The Presocratic Tradition from Parmenides to Democritus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 28.
2. *Metaphysics*, 982b11.
3. Coxon, *Fragments*, 8:26–30, p. 68.
4. *Metaphysics*, 981a1–5.
5. Francis Bacon, *Advancement of Learning II*, in *Francis Bacon: The Major Works*, ed. Brian Vickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 193–94: "And herein I cannot a little marvel at the philosopher Aristotle, that did proceed in such a spirit of difference and contradiction toward all antiquity: undertaking not only to frame new words of science at pleasure, but to confound and extinguish all ancient wisdom; insomuch as he never nameth or mentioneth ancient author or opinion, but to confute or reprove; wherein for glory, and drawing followers and disciples, he took the right course."
6. Harold Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Presocratic Philosophy* (New York: Octagon, 1971), 31.

7. William A. Heidel, "Antecedents of Greek Corpuscular Theories," reprinted in *Selected Papers* (New York: Garland, 1980), 116.

8. Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Presocratic Philosophy*, 110.

9. John B. McDiarmid, "Theophrastus on the Presocratic Causes," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 61 (1953): 85–156.

10. G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, and M. Schofield, eds., *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 120.

11. Francis M. Cornford, *Principium Sapientiae: The Origins of Greek Philosophical Thought*, ed. W. K. C. Guthrie (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1971), 159.

12. *Metaphysics*, 986b8–22.

13. Heidel, "Qualitative Change in Presocratic Philosophy," reprinted in *Selected Papers*, 365.

14. Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Presocratic Philosophy*.

15. Cherniss, "The Characteristics and Effects of Presocratic Philosophy," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 12 (1951): 325.

16. Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 107–8.

17. Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 107–8.

18. Kirk, Raven, and Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers*, 107–8.

19. Of the scholars who accept the proposition that Anaximander's theory of nature involves matter that undergoes change as alteration, notable is Uvo Holscher, "Anaximander and the Beginnings of Greek Philosophy," in *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy: The Beginnings of Philosophy*, vol. 1., ed. David Furley and R. E. Allen (New York: Humanities Press, 1970), 295. R. M. Dancy, in "Thales, Anaximander and Infinity," *Apeiron* 22 (1989): 159, makes an important argument on this point. H. B. Gottschalk ("Anaximander's Apeiron," *Phronesis* 10 [1965]: 44) argues in a way that is consistent with this thesis, and G. E. R. Lloyd (*Early Greek Science: Thales to Aristotle* [New York: Norton, 1970], 36) would also agree on this point.

20. Charles H. Kahn, at least, holds this view. See *Anaximander and the Origins of Greek Cosmology* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), 126.

21. McDiarmid, "Theophrastus on the Presocratic Causes."

22. Heidel, "Qualitative Change."

23. Cornford, *Principium Sapientiae*.

24. W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 1, *The Earlier Presocratics and the Pythagoreans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962).

25. Kahn, *Origins of Greek Cosmology*, 119. Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics*, trans. Richard J. Blackwell, Richard J. Spath, and W. Edmund Thirlkel (Notre Dame, IN: Dumb Ox Books, 1999), 176, #353.

26. Aristotle, *Physics*, 204b–205a6. Cf. Aquinas, *Commentary*, 178, #356.

27. John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 3rd ed. (New York: Meridian, 1965).

28. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 1.

29. Cornford, *Principium Sapientiae*.

30. Gregory Vlastos, "Equality and Justice in Early Greek Cosmologies," *Classical Philology* 42 (1947): 156–78.

31. Kirk, Raven, and Schofield share Vlastos's theory in this respect. Cf. *Presocratic Philosophers*, 119.

32. Two scholars that I know of have argued that the four simple bodies are indeed the constituents, against one another, in Anaximander's metaphorical reference to justice in the fragment. They each argue, though, that apeiron is the judge which imposes an order upon the simple bodies, or rules them. See Joyce Engmann, "Cosmic Justice in Anaximander," *Phronesis* 36 (1991): 13, and Gad Freudenthal, "The Theory of Opposites and an Ordered Universe: Physics and Metaphysics in Anaximander," *Phronesis* 31 (1986): 209. Yet, if it doesn't make sense to view the relationship between the simple bodies themselves as even remotely ones of justice or injustice, *this* notion of the role of apeiron won't make sense either.

33. *Physics*, 203b3–15.

Chapter Three

Parmenides' Influence on Empedocles and Anaxagoras

Empedocles and Anaxagoras are the first two major philosophers to write after the unveiling of Parmenides' argument. Aristotle, one of the most important sources that we have on the pre-Socratic philosophers and their theories, does not often indicate express links between Parmenides and these two thinkers. In our scholarship, a quite contrary view has crystallized. A majority of commentators believe that both Empedocles and Anaxagoras sustain, and indeed embrace, the crucial Parmenidean postulate that there is no real qualitative change in nature.[1]

In Parmenides' "Way of Truth," the perishable world which holds the attention of ordinary opinions basically falls by the wayside. The goddess's argument is all or nothing: "Thus it must either be entirely or not be at all" (8:10). To "be entirely," in accordance with Parmenides' argument, the object must not have any origins. It must simply be, now as forever, "ungenerated and imperishable, entire, unique, unmoved and perfect" (8:2–3).[2]

Empedocles and Anaxagoras, in this more recent view of the commentators, do not dispute the fundamental thesis of Parmenides. The pluralists too, in this argument, deny that there is any real qualitative change in nature. However, Empedocles and Anaxagoras attempt to do something that Parmenides does not do in his "way of truth"; they attempt to provide some explanation for the appearances of the perishable objects in nature. To do this, they must assert multiple bodies and local motion as the premises. However, neither of these claims in themselves disturb Parmenides' core conviction in the argument we are considering.

The influence of Parmenides on Empedocles and Anaxagoras is surely obvious. Both thinkers indicate familiarity with the Parmenidean logic of "is or is not." Still, the theories of these two thinkers are vastly different from

Parmenides' poem. Several theories of qualitative change in nature are unfolded, at least on a superficial level. It is necessary to examine them more carefully in order to test this claim that the pluralists too deny the reality of qualitative change in nature.

The physics of Empedocles, to start with, contains some simple principles in accordance with the interpretation under examination. There are several irreducible natural bodies in Empedocles' theory, and there are alternate motions of combination and separation. According to the Parmenidean core thesis, the irreducible elements never can actually combine, and for that reason, they can never really separate either. Inalterable means just that. The aggregation of discrete particles, though, in these forms of local motion, would supply some kind of explanation for the appearance of qualitative change. This is the thrust of the current interpretation of Empedocles.

In the secondary literature, the pluralists' mingling of particles is said to be one of mechanical, or local motion. Nature cannot intend for any change, under the theory of mechanical movement. W. K. C. Guthrie makes it clear that by the term "mechanical," "accidental" is meant. "The fragments, then, confirm the fortuitous character of the formation of organic nature" (162). "In spite of his religious outlook and the choice of Aphrodite, spirit of harmony and goodness, as one of the motive powers, Empedocles, like the Ionians, is no teleologist in his description of the physical world" (162). "In effect, the formation of a cosmos is the undersigned and purposeless result of a clash between material substances each driven in certain ways by its own internal impulse" (164).[3]

M. R. Wright describes Empedocles this way: "There can be no doubt that Empedocles was aware of Parmenides' work and that it was a major influence in shaping his own physics. . . . Primarily Empedocles was persuaded by arguments of Parmenides that denied . . . and he seized on the first deduction from this, that there is no genesis or perishing, for these entail nonexistence. What exists cannot be added to or subtracted from in any way; birth and death, coming to be and passing away, are names used by men mistakenly, for they do not describe what is true" (29).[4]

A. P. D. Mourelatos states, of Empedocles, that "in the testimonia we also find explicit corroboration of the thesis I have been promoting, that all mixtures in Empedocles, including ostensibly homogenous ones, are fundamentally, mechanical aggregations" (177).[5] Daniel Graham, a more recent commentator, gives crisp expression to a point of view which is by now widely shared: that the pluralists have transferred, to their several original kinds of matter, the predicates imposed upon true Being by Parmenides. Graham writes, "to save the appearances, the pluralists Empedocles, Anaxagoras and the atomists posit a plurality of beings that can interact" (165–66).

> The dominant model of explanation of Empedocles and Anaxagoras is mixture. The elements mix together to produce phenomenal objects. The ingredients of mixture preexist and will continue to exist after the mixture itself ceases, while the mixture produced is a temporary state of interaction of everlasting constituents. At the ultimate level of description, the mixture does not exist, but only the changeless elements themselves. Yet at another level their interaction does produce changing events. We can distinguish between a changeless Eleatic world of elements and a changing world of events. Those events are derivative and hence in some sense not real- that is, not ultimate principles of explanation. But neither are they mere illusions. They are derivative states of the ultimate principles. The model provides a distinction between the ultimate and the derivative, the real and the phenomenal. (171–72)[6]

The commentators rightly state that both Empedocles and Anaxagoras are alarmed and responsive to Parmenides' argument. This does not however automatically mean that Empedocles and Anaxagoras therefore accept Parmenides' key postulates.

EMPEDOCLES

To turn to Empedocles first, it is fitting to pay some attention to the way he introduces himself, and his arguments, to us. Parmenides' goddess, in order for her to be able to teach her arguments, needs to escort her pupil "far removed indeed from the step of men" (1:28). The blessed youth must abandon his ancestral home, he must forsake the ways and means of knowing which all ordinary mortals rely upon. The blessed youth will have to surrender to the goddess's mode of argument in order to learn, and in order to do that, he must forswear the evidence of his senses, his experience and memory. "And let not habit do violence to you on the empirical way of exercising an unseeing eye and a noisy ear and tongue, but decide by discourse the controversial test enjoined by me" (7:2–5). Empedocles himself, however, completely reverses this original disposition in his reader.

A great perplexity arises in many of Parmenides' readers, due to the fact that the learner and teacher themselves do not seem to be accounted for by the "way of truth." Empedocles though is notably frank and candid in asserting the dependence of inquiry itself upon beings whose wisdom must be won from mortal lives:

> For limited are the means of grasping (i.e. the organs of sense perception) which are scattered throughout their limbs, and many are the miseries that press in and blunt the thoughts. And having looked at only a small part of existence during their lives, doomed to perish swiftly like smoke that are carried aloft, and wafted away, believing only that upon which as individuals they chance to hit as they wander in all directions; but every man preens himself on having found the Whole: so little are

> these things to be seen by men or to be heard, or to be comprehended by the Mind! But you, since you have come here into retirement, shall learn—not more than mortal intellect can attain. (frag. 2)[7]

Parmenides' goddess repeatedly denies that her views can even be intelligibly challenged. "Come now and I will tell you (and do you preserve my story, when you have heard it) about those ways of enquiry which are alone conceivable" (3:1–2). The beliefs of mortals, the goddess says, "comprise no genuine conviction" (1:29–30). "Only one story of the way is still left" (8:1). To this attitude, Empedocles responds with the observation that no inquirer whatsoever is capable of knowing more than a small portion of what is knowable, and furthermore, that he is "doomed to perish swiftly like smoke."

Empedocles also appeals to a goddess, but it is clearly not the goddess from Parmenides' "way of truth." "But, ye gods, avert from my tongue the madness of those men, and guide forth from my reverent lips a pure stream!" (frag. 3). "I beseech thee also, much-wooed white-armed maiden muse, convey to me such knowledge as divine law allows us creatures of a day to hear, driving the well harnessed car from the realm of piety. Nor shall the flowers of honor paid to fame by mortals force you at least to accept them on condition that you rashly say more than is holy—and are thereupon enthroned on the heights of wisdom!" (frag. 3)

The argument which Empedocles intends to teach will tolerate no chauvinistic disdain for the knowledge provided by sense perception. "But come, observe with every means, to see by which way each thing is clear, and do not hold any percept of sight higher in credibility than those according to hearing, nor set the loud-sounding hearing above the evidence of the tongue; nor refuse credence to any of the other limbs where there exists a path for perception, but use whatever way of perception makes each thing clear" (frag. 3).

In the first fragment of Parmenides' poem, the inquiry to be conducted is seen to depend upon flight from ordinary standards of propriety and truth. Before the blessed youth can come before the goddess and hear the lessons which she has in store, he must be secreted away, past the guardians of "retributive justice" and ancestral order, by the cunning, treachery, and deceit of the goddess's charioteers.

> The mares that carry me kept conveying me as far as ever my spirit reached, once they had taken and set me on the goddess' way of much discourse, which carries through every stage onwards a man of understanding. On this I was carried, for on this the sagacious mares were carrying me, straining at the chariot and guided by maidens along the way. . . . There stand the gates between the journeys of night and day, enclosed at top and bottom by a lintel and threshold of stone, and themselves fitting closely to a great architrave in the aether. The keys, which allow to open first the one gate and the other, retributive justice holds; whom the maidens blandished

> with soft words and persuaded cunningly to thrust the locked gate bar for them in a moment from the gates, which swung open and made vacant the gulf of the gateway, turning successively in their sockets the bronze-fitted posts. (Coxon, frag. 1:1–19)

EMPEDOCLES' ARCHAI: THE FOUR ROOTS

If Empedocles' four roots faithfully embody Parmenides' conviction that there is no qualitative change in nature, then no true change of quality can occur in any of them. It is relevant that Empedocles has selected the ordinarily perceptible, simple bodies as his four roots of irreducible being: earth, water, air, and fire. It is also notable that these roots, as Empedocles describes them, are marked by the presence of the contraries: "Hear first the four roots of things: bright Zeus, and life-bearing Hera and Aidoneus, and Nestis who causes a mortal spring of moisture to flow with her tears" (frag. 6, p. 52).

One thing can be noticed immediately. Parmenides never mentions any of the Hesiodic gods except for Eros: Eros, who along with Aphrodite, represents the treacherous and the dangerous in Olympia. In Parmenides' "way of truth," the rest of the Olympian gods, that is, the gods who are generated, are all consigned to imprisonment in the embargo on generation in fragment eight. All of the Olympian and even the non-Olympian gods are generated in Hesiod, and here Empedocles enumerates both Zeus the ruler and his wife, Hera, as among the founding arche of reality.

The predicates which involve contraries are indicative of a disposition to qualitative change. Theories of eternal body, such as Parmenides' true Being and Democritus's atoms, allege that no "secondary qualities" count among the true predicates of being. This makes sense, since the presence of the contraries indicates (there is nothing else that it can indicate) a disposition to change. What is wet will become dry; what is bright will become dark; what is fertile will become infertile.

A second thing to note is that Empedocles allows that the four roots themselves might have been generated at some point in time. He claims that they cannot be *destroyed*, but he mentions that the roots themselves can be thought of as created. "All these elements are equal and of the same age in their creation; but each presides over its own office, and each has its own character, and they prevail in turn in the course of time. And besides these, nothing else comes into being, nor does anything cease. For if they had been perishing continuously, they would Be no more; and what could increase the whole?" (Freeman, frag. 17).

Parmenides' real being cannot have been generated at some point in time. That theory puts true being beyond time, for "it never was nor will be, since it is now all together, one, indivisible" (8:5). To have an origin, in Parme-

nides' thesis, is to fall not merely out of the domain of being entire, but it is frankly to be dismissed from the propriety of thought itself. "For it is for being, but nothing is not. These things I command you to heed" (frag. 5). Whatever comes to be, at some point in time involved non-being, and will do so again in the future. These are the predicates which Parmenides has stricken from his account of real being: "the other, that a thing is not, and that it must needs not be, this I tell you is a path wholly without report, for you can neither know what is not (for it is impossible) nor tell of it" (frag. 3). Qualitative alteration, let alone generation, would mean for Parmenides that true being is, in some aspect of its existence, lacking or incomplete, mixing with the forbidden "not": "for it is not lawful that Being should be incomplete, for it is not defective, whereas not-being would lack everything" (Coxon, frag. 8:31–33, p. 70).

In the preceding chapters, we have examined two very distinct theories of the proposition that "nothing comes from nothing." The principle, originally discovered by the Milesian natural philosophers, was there meant to indicate that there is a relationship, an exchange, between eternal and perishable matter. Perishable matter, when it comes-to-be, does not come to be out of nothing in the Milesian view; it comes to be out of an imperceptible, but nevertheless real eternal matter. When the perishable passes away, it passes away not into absolute nothingness, but back into the eternal reservoir from which it first emerged.

Justice, to Anaximander, straddles this boundary, and adjudicates the time allotted to matter in its perishable incarnation. Anaximander, in the one surviving fragment we have from him, talks about two species of things: "the non limited" and "existing things." Between these two, "they give justice and make reparation to one another for their injustice, according to the arrangement of time" (Freeman, frag. 1, p. 19). Empedocles is also sensitive to how human beings can offend against "Right" when they speak harshly of passing away, as if the existing things had no debt to the "non-limited."

Parmenides' formulation of the proposition that "nothing comes from nothing," as noted previously, involves a radically different *conception*. For Parmenides argues something that the Milesians did not argue: that matter in its eternal aspect is *perfect*, averse to any passage into perishable forms. For this reason, Parmenides' goddess speaks quite harshly of all ordinary perceptions. The claim that ordinary perceptions are bereft of truth does indeed follow from Parmenides' argument. Yet it does *not* have a root in the theory of Anaximander or Thales. Our question then is: to which theory of "nothing comes from nothing" is Empedocles' argument obliged?

Empedocles says, in fragment 8: "And I shall tell you another thing: there is no creation of substance in any one of the mortal existences, nor any end in execrable death, but only mixing and exchange of what has been mixed; and the name 'substance' is applied to them by mankind" (Freeman, frag. 8, p.

52). In fragment 9: "But men, when these elements have been mixed in the form of a man and come into the light, or in the form of a species of wild animals, or plants or birds, then say that this has 'come into being'; and when they separate, this men call sad fate (death). The terms that Right demands they do not use; but through custom I myself also apply these names" (Freeman, frag. 9, p. 52).

The above passage is not conclusive. However, if we examine a couple of additional passages, we can obtain clearer bearings. It can be seen that in significant ways, Empedocles is working within the theoretical parameters of the Milesian, and not of the Parmenidean theory. "Fools!—For they have no long-sighted thoughts, since they imagine that what previously did not exist comes into being, or that a thing dies and is utterly destroyed" (frag. 11, p. 52). "From what in no-wise exists, it is impossible for anything to come into being; and for being to perish completely is incapable of fulfillment and unthinkable; for it will always be there, wherever anyone may place it on any occasion" (frag. 12, p. 52).

"That a thing dies and is *utterly* destroyed," "from what in *no-wise* exists," "for being to perish *completely*": this is the way that Empedocles discusses his roots and mixtures. For Parmenides, none of these adjectives can have any place in the discussion of true Being. True Being, for Parmenides, has no component of alteration or change. For Empedocles, it is clear that it is only absolute perishing, and absolute generation, which he denies. The belief that "nothing comes from nothing" in the manner discussed by Empedocles applies equally to the theories of the Milesians and Aristotle. It does not apply to Parmenides.[8] The four roots in Empedocles' theory are not entirely Parmenidean beings.

THE TRUE INNOVATION OF EMPEDOCLES

For the scholars who equate Empedocles' roots with Parmenides' being, there obviously can only be one mode of aggregation and one mode of dispersion. Guthrie describes it well, as noted previously. Since Parmenidean bodies cannot be penetrated, or penetrate other real bodies, the consequence would be a mixture like that of marbles in a jar. Dispersion would be explained as the emptying of the jar, or something along these lines.

Empedocles, however, presents a dual theory of generation. A dual theory of mixture can only make sense if there is a qualitative difference between two modes of combination and separation. Despite the direct statements in Empedocles' text, A. A. Long disputes that we can properly attribute such a theory to Empedocles. "What we would call the universe or the real is viewed by Empedocles as an alternation of one and many. The 'one' is a

condition of unity, a 'single cosmos,' but the many is a plurality of six entities, or classes of entities, which in some sense comes to be by separation from the one, and in some sense ceases to be by recombination into the one. The stuff of which these six entities consist is imperishable, but they only exist as individual things . . . when they are sundered from the one" (404).[9]

Empedocles, in fragment 17, says the following: "I shall tell of a double process: at one time it increased so as to be a single one out of many; at another time again it grew apart so as to be Many out of one. There is a double creation of mortals and a double decline: the union of all things causes the birth and destruction of the one race of mortals, the other is reared as the elements grow apart, and then flies asunder." Long interprets fragment B17 in the following way: "The traditional interpretation seeks evidence from fragment 17 of a world created and destroyed by the work of strife. In my judgment that evidence is nor forthcoming. If there were independent evidence that Empedocles had such a theory, line 5 ('nurtured by things grown apart') might be read as a reference to it. But I believe that line is most convincingly taken as a veiled reference to the appearance and disappearance of the entities as separate, uncompounded entities" (412).[10]

Since it is now disproved that Empedocles' four roots have the predicates of Parmenides' being, there is no reason that we can summon to dismiss Empedocles' statement. It is because the mixtures in Empedocles' theory are more than mere semblances or aggregates of discrete particles that two types of generation and two types of passing away have a place in his theory. The irreducible particles to which Long refers do not resemble the Empedoclean roots, which the latter describes as "running through one another" (frag. 55). The Empedoclean roots "become" men, and the other perishable beings; but the ways of becoming include a beautiful path, as well as a horrible one.

Our commentators like to describe Empedocles' love and hate as "mechanical," as akin to attraction and repulsion. Attraction and repulsion can be glossed as accidental or incidental relations between natural bodies. For Empedocles, however, love and hate are qualitatively different origins for combination. The mixture of the four roots can and does take place, according to Empedocles, under the aegis of both principles at different times: "there is a double creation of mortals and a double decline: the union of all things causes the birth and destruction of the one race of mortals, the other is reared as the elements grow apart, and then flies asunder" (Freeman, frag. 17, p. 53).

The physics of Empedocles is a cycle. At the end of one cycle is the culmination of love. In that culmination, everything has (as much as possible) gathered into a unity. At the other end of the cycle is the reign of the principle of "baneful hate" over the four roots. In the reign of hate, the roots have become entirely unmixed. The two species of generation occur in the middle regions of the cycle. There is a generation that occurs when love and

its unity are disintegrating into the reign of hate, where everything is becoming separated. There is also a generation that occurs when the separated elements, pulling loose from the dominion of hatred, come under the dominion of love.

The generation which occurs under the aegis of increasing hate is chaotic: the beings there produced are mutilated and disordered, offering frightful countenance, which Empedocles speaks of in disdainful tones. The generation which occurs under love's aegis, by contrast, is one where "intelligence" and "harmony" are the watchwords: in the beings generated by love, natural objects have their proper forms, which contain beauty and goodness and proportion:

> Sometimes through love all the limbs which the body has as its lot come together into one, in the prime of flourishing life; at another time, sundered by evil feuds, they wander severally by the breakers of the shore of life. (frag. 20)

> But come, observe the following witness to my previous discourse, lest in my former statements there was any substance of which the form was missing. Observe the sun, bright to see and hot everywhere, and all the immortal things (heavenly bodies) drenched with its heat and brilliant light; and observe the rain, dark and chill over everything; and from the earth issue forth things based on the soil and the solid. But in the reign of wrath, they are all different in form and separate, while in the reign of love they come together and long for one another. (frag. 21)

The things which are suitable for mixture are consistently described by Empedocles as "united in affection," and such as "long for one another" (frag. 21, 22 respectively). The fragment which likens nature to a painter indicates the natural principle of love, for the colors are said to be "mixed together in harmony" (frag. 23). Where love is, intelligence is. At least, this is the drift of Empedocles' theory. In the fragment concerning the painters, the four roots are brought together in a ratio, a proportion, not haphazardly or merely equally. Discernment and judgment are indicated: "taking more of some, less of another, create from them forms like to all things, making trees and men and women and animals and bird and fish nurtured in water and even long lived gods, who are highest in honor" (p. 55).

Empedocles uses the words "faultless love": this hardly comes across through the use of the word "attraction" to describe Empedocles' natural principle. Under the dominion of love, when the elements have been mostly removed from the sway of hate, this is when harmony and intelligence and beautiful forms are created. However, even at this time when generation is occurring under love's dominion, some portion of the roots remains under the sway of hate, and Empedocles makes the contrast between these two groups vivid. "But many things stand unmixed side by side with the things mixing—all those which hate still aloft checked, since it had not yet fault-

lessly withdrawn from the whole to the outermost limits of the circle, but was remaining in some places, and in other places departing from the limbs of the sphere" (frag. 35, p. 57).

It is under the dominion of hatred, when the elements have completely separated, that the grotesque combinations are formed. "Come now, hear how the fire as it was separated sent up the night-produced shoots of men and much-lamenting women; for my tale is not wide of the mark nor ill informed. At first, undifferentiated shapes of earth arose, having a share of both elements water and heat. These the fire sent up, wishing to reach its like, but they did not yet exhibit a lovely body with limbs, nor the voice and organ as is proper to men" (frag. 62, p. 59).

The limbs are separate during the time of hatred and strife, "sundered by evil feuds" (frag. 20). "On it (earth) many foreheads without necks sprang forth, and arms wandered unattached, bereft of shoulders, and eyes strayed about alone, needing brows" (frag. 57). "Many creatures were created with a face and a breast on both sides, offspring of cattle with the fronts of men, and again there arose offspring of men with heads of cattle" (frag. 61).

It is Empedocles himself who has reserved harmony, proportion, and reason (ratio) to the natural principle of love; it is Empedocles, not a scholarly gloss, which is the source of the definition of hatred, as a counter-principle of motion, as "baneful" (frag. 22) and "completely unaccustomed to combine." Aristotle calls Empedocles confused, and holds that Empedocles does not adequately work out the premises of the argument that he is attempting to make.[11] Aristotle has received severe censure from many of our commentators for these observations, but it is hard to find the defect in what Aristotle has to say.

Aristotle argues that there is trouble in the unity which is produced at the apex of love's power, in the cycle sketched by Empedocles. For in that unity, everything is forced to fuse into a mixture. None of the perishable, formed objects which were created during the earlier time of love's dominion can survive in the period of maximum unity. Empedocles, Aristotle holds, therefore mixes up a destructive episode in his dominion of love, which he is otherwise determined to celebrate.[12]

Likewise, in the view of Aristotle, the dominion of hatred in Empedocles' theory is assigned some tasks which are constructive rather than destructive. For example, after the period of love's maximum unity, hate begins to draw the elements into separation. At some point the separated elements become antagonistic and disposed toward depraved and grotesque configurations, but in Aristotle's view, there must be a moment when the separation of the elements into distinct unities is helpful to any process of generation.

Aristotle wants to argue that Empedocles has presented nature improperly. Generation in accordance with love, in Aristotle's own theory, would be movement in the natural body in accordance with its own form. It would not

contain an admixture of evil in it, and for Aristotle as for Empedocles, passing away itself does not represent an evil so long as the passing away is by nature, and not by external impediment or violence.

Force suppresses the principles of motion *within* a natural being, and thus has no admixture of good in it. Therefore this is said to be a defect in Empedocles' theory. For Aristotle, the natural principle of hatred indicates compulsion, or the subjection of a natural being to a force which cuts against its grain, which would make that object submit to pressures which destroy its internal principles of development.

EMPEDOCLES′ DIVINITY

The period of time when love's dominion has reached its pinnacle is indeed one where the four roots themselves come quite close to being buried in one another. The natural beings formed under love's generation will not indeed survive at the moment when love is supremely dominant. However, in that moment, the unity for Empedocles is rather a divine, than a material being.

Empedocles makes a couple of things clear. First, the four roots at this point do not have articulated differences. Since the four roots are enmattered, there is clearly a limit to the unity which they achieve under love's reign. Second, when love's reign is at its apex, the four roots approximate, but do not constitute, a divine entity, "equal in all directions to himself and altogether eternal, a rounded sphere enjoying a circular solitude" (frag. 28).

The rounded sphere, "altogether eternal," immediately suggests Parmenides' true being, "in a state of perfection from every viewpoint, like the volume of a spherical ball, and equally poised in every direction from its center" (frag. 8:42–44). Empedocles' divinity, however, is not enmattered. Under love's government, the material world seems to approach the tranquil unity of the divine sphere in Empedocles, but that unity drifts apart, as the power of hate asserts itself. Earlier we noted that the four roots themselves are described as "created" by Empedocles. In the divine sphere, we have the probable author of that creation.

Empedocles describes his sphere, pointedly, as superior to any material being. "For there do not start two branches from his back; he has no feet, no swift knees, no organs of reproduction; but he was a sphere, and in all directions equal to himself" (frag. 29). Matter, however, as in the four roots, can do no more than approximate, for a limited time, to this eternal condition. Indeed, in Empedocles' scheme, the fall or corruption of matter, of the archai, into a process of suffering, in need of redemption, is fated. "Therein are articulated neither the swift limbs of the sun, nor the shaggy might of earth, nor the sea: so firmly is it (the whole) fixed in a close-set secrecy, a rounded

sphere enjoying a circular solitude" (frag. 27). "There is no strife or unseemly war in his limbs" (frag. 27a). "But he (God) is equal in all directions to himself and altogether eternal" (frag. 28).

Aristotle objects to this depiction of nature generally. His reasoning is neither extraordinary nor obtuse. For if nature truly fated creation to alternating periods of love and hatred, it would be as misguided to praise the one as to blame the other. The point is that Empedocles does indeed mean to praise the one and to blame the other. If we accept that assumption for the moment, it will become clear that it does not make sense for nature itself to be the author of both love and hate. Love, containing the goodness of nature's intention, will not share any status with hate. Hate, rather, as violence, would be seen as hostility to nature, as unnatural motion kin to destruction.

ANAXAGORAS

The commentators say that Anaxagoras too accepts key postulates from Parmenides. The central thesis of Parmenides is that the true being is eternally self-same with itself: it does not and cannot, by Parmenides' doctrine, participate in qualitative change or becoming. "Since now its limit is ultimate, Being is in a state of perfection from every viewpoint, like the volume of a spherical ball, and equally poised in every direction from its center" (Coxon, frag. 8:42–44, p. 74).

They say that Anaxagoras, like Empedocles, believes that true being has the qualities which Parmenides described previously. True being, they say, as conceived in Anaxagoras's physics, can undergo no motion which involves becoming. The only difference between Anaxagoras and Parmenides, according to the argument we are examining here, is that Anaxagoras asserts that true reality is constituted by multiple bodies, rather than by the one single unity of being presented by Parmenides.

A. P. D. Mourelatos, measuring the pluralist theories against the legacy of Eleatic argument, observes that "the Eleatics did not argue merely against a generation ex nihilo and a reduction to nihil; they argued against any sort of generation, any sort of perishing, and any sort of change."[13] Montgomery Furth puts the matter this way: "There follow the remaining results, for which Parmenides became famous. I realize that it is not easy to visualize intuitively the universe being described here, but we should try. (1) No coming to be, either existential or predicative. (2) No ceasing to be. (3) That which is has no beginning or end. (4) It is a single continuous solid mass, and it is also wholly saturated with every property—this is very important in connection with Anaxagoras" (101). "This is how Eleatic logic proves the world really to be" (102).[14] Guthrie basically agrees with that formulation:

"Like Empedocles, Anaxagoras accepted the Parmenidean canons that there is no empty space and that coming into being and perishing into not-being are strictly impossible, and in general terms he accepted the same alternative" (271).[15]

David Furley writes this of Anaxagoras: "This is a theory which tries, in the most literal minded way, to show how Parmenides' premise that 'what is not' is not to be spoken of, and his argument against coming to be can be accepted, without making the variety and change of the perceptible world a mere illusion" (80). "But my picture of Anaxagoras is of a kind of Ajax among the pre-Socratics, unable to appreciate the advantages of modern, more flexible ways, and heroically adhering to the strictest interpretation of the Parmenidean code" (86).[16] Francis Cornford makes the following argument: "Anaxagoras (as Aristotle remarks, *Physics* 187a) began by accepting Parmenides' doctrine that nothing which is can come into being from what is not. This was a denial of all coming into being out of nonexistence, and also of all change—something coming into being out of what was not that thing. Anaxagoras accepts this principle more thoroughly than the other pluralists, but he sees (as they saw) that the motionless monism deduced by Parmenides can be avoided by postulating an original plurality of unalterable 'things that are' and motion in space, the only change that does not involve 'becoming'" (276).[17] Graham essentially repeats these views, though more recently. "To save the appearances, the pluralists Empedocles, Anaxagoras and the atomists posit a plurality of beings that can interact" (165–66). "It is an accomplishment of 20th century philosophy to see that Parmenides did change the way the issues were conceived. According to the dominant view, Parmenides argued effectively against all motion and change, attacking the very foundations of Ionian natural philosophy. In a desperate attempt to rescue cosmology, Empedocles and Anaxagoras conceded that coming to be and perishing are impossible, but they allowed arrangement and rearrangement of elements which have the Eleatic properties of being everlasting and unchanging in their natures" (166). "Both Empedocles and Anaxagoras wholeheartedly endorse Parmenides' rejection of coming to be and perishing, without qualification or implied criticism" (167).[18]

The pluralist thesis about Anaxagoras indicates that Parmenides' radical distinction between ordinarily perceived objects and true Being is upheld by Anaxagoras. Robert Wardy makes this point: "That they come after Parmenides is not just a chronological fact: what they have to say is importantly constrained by their acceptance of central Eleatic tenets. The individual contributions of these Presocratics together constitute a cohesive chapter of philosophical history because all of them either endorse Parmenides' fundamental contention that *in truth* nothing comes into or goes out of existence, or at the very least that there must be something in the world satisfying his demands for changelessness."[19]

It is true, on the one hand, that Anaxagoras several times echoes the central Parmenidean postulate. "For it is impossible that being should not-be" (frag. 3); "how can hair come from not-hair, and flesh from not-flesh?" (frag. 10). "No thing comes into being and passes away, but it is mixed together or separated from existing things" (frag. 17). Certainly, "nothing comes from nothing," in Anaxagoras's view.

On the other hand, what the commentators say about the eternal matter in Anaxagoras's theory does not seem accurate. It is not enough to hold, as Anaxagoras certainly does hold, that there are eternal things. Parmenides' argument, unlike the Milesian argument, insists that the eternal thing is *complete*. Even if we accept the commentators' argument that Anaxagoras has broken down the Parmenidean unity into multiple bodies, it does not follow, as Graham has said previously, that Anaxagoras's elements "have the Eleatic properties of being everlasting and unchanging in their natures." For the multiple bodies which Anaxagoras presents in his original mixture do not have such a perfect limit, as Parmenides' eternal being does. "For it must not be either at all greater or at all smaller in one regard than in another. For neither has not-being any being which could halt the coming together of being, nor is being capable of being more than being in one regard and less in another, since it is all inviolate. For it is equal with itself from every view and encounters determination all alike" (Coxon, frag. 8:42–49, p. 74). In fact, in Anaxagoras's theory, the eternal things are characterized by the antithesis of limit, by the "infinite."

THE ROLE OF THE INFINITE IN ANAXAGORAS'S THEORY

Anaxagoras, with pronounced vigor, makes the origins of his natural world infinite rather than finite. There are infinite seeds and qualities in the beginning of nature in Anaxagoras's theory, and they are said to be all mixed up together. "All things were together, infinite in number and in smallness. For the small also was infinite. And since all were together, nothing was distinguishable because of its smallness" (Freeman, frag. 1, p. 83). Anaxagoras even makes the kinds of particles themselves infinite.

The perfection of Being that Parmenides' argument insists upon is characterized by "limit" and "determination." True Being, in the argument taught to the blessed youth by the goddess, "lies by itself and remains thus where it is perpetually, for strong necessity holds it in the bondage of a limit, which keeps it apart, because it is not lawful that Being should be incomplete, for it is not defective, whereas not-being would lack everything" (8:30–33).

Anaxagoras, taking up Parmenides' specific claim that "it is impossible that being should not-be," fuses it together with the infinite, with the express-

ly *unlimited*. "For in small there is no least, but only a lesser: for it is impossible that Being should not-be; and in Great there is always a Greater" (frag. 3).

We need to examine the concept of the infinite here, in order to come to an understanding about what Anaxagoras means in this fragment. Perfection, as Parmenides correctly argues, implies a self-sufficient whole, something which we may not go beyond to something still truer or more perfect. The Parmenidean Being is accordingly finite. The infinite can never fit the characteristics of Parmenides' true being, because the definition of the infinite is "that beyond which there is always something."[20] The perfect whole, as Thomas Aquinas argues, "is that outside of which there is nothing"; "therefore, the definition of the perfect, i.e. 'that beyond which there is nothing,' does not belong to the infinite."[21]

The commentators say that Anaxagoras stipulates plural bodies, all of which have the characteristics (or the decisive ones) that Parmenides ascribes to true Being in his finite unity. When one turns to Anaxagoras's theory, however, it becomes evident that one can never come to any such limit. When we fix our gaze upon the pieces of matter that are all mixed up in nature at the beginning of Anaxagoras's theory, we may take or attempt to take those particles as the elements which the commentators describe. Yet Anaxagoras tells us expressly that if we try to do this, the limit of those particles will be superseded by still smaller particles. "Since it is not possible for the least to exist, it cannot be isolated, nor come into being by itself; but as it was in the beginning, so now, all things are together" (frag. 6). "For in small there is no least, but only a lesser" (frag. 3).

If we try to apply the characteristics of Parmenides' perfect being to the individual elements, to any individual elements whatsoever in Anaxagoras's theory, we will find that the elements dissolve before our eyes. For, whenever we take up a particle or element for examination, thinking that there we would affix the limit which we think Anaxagoras provides for, what do we find? That the apparent element is itself but a compound, which itself can be reduced to still smaller elements.

When we examine any element or particle based on Anaxagoras's guidelines, and attempt to define it with the Parmenidean postulates, it becomes apparent that the enterprise is futile. For the particle which is now under investigation, loses its status of perfection as soon as it becomes the object of specific scrutiny. It loses its status of perfection because it is revealed to have no limit of its own, but rather the infinite pieces which it contains (by Anaxagoras's postulates) make the particle we started out with less ultimate, and less real, than the new layer of elements which have been uncovered as a matter of course.

This is the nature of the infinite. It is not possible to take up more than a limited quantity for inspection or thought at any one time, but whenever one

does take up a quantity for thought, the postulate of the infinite insists that the quantity considered will be overridden, disproved as a limit by the next part which the infinite always brings before us. No matter whether one is involved in the process of dividing the mixed particles into their smallest elements, or in attempting to find the largest such elements by addition, infinitude is the result in the following way. Since the divisibility of the particles into infinitely smaller elements is initiated by our investigation into it, each and every effort of our investigation will leave us with an incomplete comprehension of the physical reality. This is to say that the infinite, when one is engaged in dividing bodies into ever smaller parts, can never exist together all at the same time. For in the next investigation the reality surveyed will be a different, smaller part of the infinite but still not the smallest.

The alleged perfection in Parmenides' finite Being is anchored in its limits, and it is always a violation of a limit which leads to the persecution of coming to be and perishing by Parmenides' idea of justice. "Nor will the strength of conviction ever impel anything to come to be alongside it from not-being," the goddess solemnly states; "therefore justice did not loosen it in her fetters and move it either to come to be or to be perishing but holds it fast, and the decision regarding these things depends on that of the issue, *is or is not*" (frag. 8:13–15). Yet the infinite is just that case where there must be parts, parts which cannot all exist at the same time, parts of before and after which defeat unity.

The elements in Anaxagoras's theory not only allow for real bodies to come into existence alongside the element under examination; they frankly allow for the displacement of any element we consider, by still more ultimate, but themselves also reducible, particles. Justice does not hold eternal being in its fetters, in Anaxagoras's theory; any element which Parmenides' justice attempts to fasten down as the ultimate, irreducible being, due to its Anaxagorean predisposition, decomposes and disintegrates into some part of being not yet in the goddess's grasp. And the goddess of Parmenides never can catch up to some ultimate particles in Anaxagoras's theory, because the infinite can never exist all at once.

Anaxagoras does this for several reasons. First, he intends to define the eternal elements in his physics as bereft of limit, as bereft of *perfection*. This is to say that Anaxagoras belongs to the Milesian tradition of eternal body. In the Milesian tradition of eternal matter, justice is described as regulating the movement of eternal matter into the limited, perishable objects of ordinary human experience. In the Milesian physics, justice is described as a certain limitation on the time allotted to perishable objects, at which point matter returns to its eternal origins. In the Milesian theory, nature itself oversees the commission of eternal matter to perishable, limited forms, and both the limited forms, and the time allotted to them, are part of the reality that nature both intends and judges. When Anaxagoras makes the eternal elements unlimited

and infinite, he is correcting, and reversing Parmenides' argument: for Anaxagoras, the perfection of limit cannot be obtained by matter in its eternal aspect, but can only be obtained through the being incorporated into the perishable, but limited forms.

For the Milesians, ordinary opinions fail to recognize that there is some continuity between the eternal and the perishable, that each has a proper place in nature's cycle. For Anaximander, justice does not involve viewing the perishables as delusive appearances, as masks for objects which truly are always eternal. Rather, for Anaximander, ordinary opinion is asked to develop respect for the proper limits assigned to perishable beings, and to take some comfort in the inferred knowledge of an eternal reservoir of future generation. "The non-limited is the original material of existing things; further, the source from which existing things derive their existence is also that to which they return at their destruction, according to necessity; for they give justice and make reparation to one another for their injustice, according to the arrangement of time" (Freeman, frag. 1, p. 19). This is what Anaxagoras means in the following quote: "The Greeks have an incorrect belief on Coming into Being and Passing Away. No thing comes into being or passes away, but it is mixed together or separated from existing things. Thus they would be correct if they called coming into being 'mixing', and passing away 'separation-off'" (Freeman, frag. 17, p. 85).

THE ROLE OF THE OPPOSITES IN ANAXAGORAS'S THEORY

Anaxagoras would dispute the interpretation outlined here. In that argument, the commentators say that Anaxagoras is not referring to particles of matter with his doctrine of infinite divisibility. Anaxagoras, they correctly say, mentions certain affections and qualities of matter in his original mixture. The doctrine of infinite divisibility, it is said, pertains only to certain pairs of opposed qualities, which each perfectly limited particle of ultimate matter is said to possess. The particles of matter in that case would still uphold the characteristics of Parmenides' limited, perfect being.

Anaxagoras, they say, when he introduces his doctrine of infinite divisibility, is referring strictly to the contraries: hot and cold, wet and dry, dark and bright. In this view, the way would be opened to hold that Anaxagoras's theory of body has finite dimensions, such that ultimate constituents can be said to exist: perfect ones, in the Parmenidean frame. John Burnet was among the first to introduce this view. "It is of those opposites, then, and not of the different forms of matter, that everything contains a portion. Every particle, however large or small, contains every one of those opposite qualities. That which is hot is also to a certain extent cold. Even snow, Anaxago-

ras affirmed, was black: that is, even the white contains a portion of the opposite quality."[22]

Francis Cornford argues along similar lines. "The proposition means 'there is a proportion of every opposite in every seed.' As we have seen already, the seeds are endowed with different qualities, even below the threshold of perceptibility. At Anaxagoras's date these qualities would be regarded not as mere qualities but as things" (311). "Like Aristotle's simple bodies, the seeds are composed of opposites, but cannot be cut up into those opposites" (313). "Regarding qualities as things (though not as substances independently existing), Anaxagoras spoke not of 'degrees of a quality' such as hotness, but of 'portions' (shares) of a thing, the hot" (314).[23] Gregory Vlastos also advances this argument. "The correct answer, and therewith the most important step ever taken toward the true understanding of Anaxagoras, was made by Tannery's suggestion that the ultimate ingredients of the seeds are the hot and the cold, the dry and the moist, and all the traditional opposites of Ionian cosmology. These are conceived not as properties of Aristotelian substances, but as 'quality-things,' or better still, as forms of energy or 'power'" (329). "The hot is that which heats, the moist that which moistens; each is an active tendency to change other things after its own fashion, unless checked, or balanced, by its opposite" (329). "That Anaxagoras shared the traditional view of the opposites is a reasonable assumption, and this not in spite of but because of the scantiness of our notices on this topic" (330).[24]

The commentators do not address or provide an answer as to what Anaxagoras means in his first fragment, when he says that the things themselves were "infinite in number." The hot and the cold, the dry and the moist, the bright and the dark, are limited enough. If we say, nevertheless, that Anaxagoras intends for his particles of matter to be Parmenidean, as perfectly limited, the question arises as to what possible role the opposites could play in such an eternal matter. The opposites are agencies of change, which cannot both exist at the same time; a body which has the opposites as part of its essential predicates would therefore seem to be a body disposed to change. Such a combination could not exist, between eternal beings and the contraries: for that which is an ultimate limit, such as Parmenides' body is, does not have any alternating qualities.

A second observation is that the opposites do not contain each other, as the particles of matter are said to contain still smaller parts of everything. "Hot" does not contain "cold." Rather, the body which is hot is disposed to alter into a cold state. It is the matter, the body, which undergoes the alternation. Hot is never cold, and never contains any pieces of cold within it.

That Anaxagoras has placed the opposites among the ingredients of the original mixture is an indication, once again, that the matter in its eternal aspect is not perfect, and not ultimate. The parts of the original mixture in Anaxagoras's theory are importantly motionless. They are also indistinguish-

able, a chaotic blend without any order. In that state, before the moving principle of nature has set things into motion, the opposites exist together. It is possible for them to be together in that original mixture, since no quality is distinguishable from any other, and no power of active motion exists in any of the ingredients. During this stage of the theory, "before these things were separated off, all things were together, nor was any colour distinguishable, for the mixing of all things prevented this (namely) the mixing of moist and dry and hot and cold and bright and dark" (frag. 4, p. 83).

However, the contraries do not *remain* together in Anaxagoras's theory, throughout the whole of it. In Anaxagoras's theory, when motion is introduced to the original mixture by the natural principle of Mind, the opposites are separated off from one another. And at this point the opposites become constituents of different natural bodies, such as is ordinarily perceived. "And when Mind began the motion, there was a separating-off from all that was being moved; and all that Mind set in motion was separated internally; and as things were moving and separating off internally, the revolution greatly increased this internal separation" (frag. 13, p. 85). "The dense and moist and cold and dark elements collected here, where now is earth, and the rare and hot and dry went outwards to the furthest part of the aether" (frag. 85).

Anaxagoras has made it clear that the opposites are only together in the original mixture. After the movement initiated by Mind, the opposites are separated off. Not so that they are "cut off with an ax": but so that they do not exist at the same time, in the same material object, as Cornford suggests that they are. "It was this revolution which caused the separation off. And dense separates from rare, and hot from cold, and bright from dark, and dry from wet. There are many portions of many things, and nothing is absolutely separated off or divided the one from the other except Mind. Mind is all alike, both the greater and the less. But nothing else is like anything else, but each individual thing is and was most obviously that of which it contains the most" (frag. 12, p. 85).

The contraries are not fully separated from one another after separating-off has occurred, of course. It is just that they will not be present at the same time. The simple bodies change into one another by the alteration of their respective contraries. "The things in the one Cosmos are not separated off from one another with an axe, neither the hot from the cold, nor the cold from the hot" (frag. 8). But it was only in the original mixture before the motion created by Mind where the contraries existed at the same time, indistinguishable from one another.

The doctrine of infinite divisibility is not limited to, or especially dedicated to, the opposites. We have presented one reason for Anaxagoras's doctrine of infinite divisibility already: to deny ultimate, perfect predicates to matter in its eternal aspect. Mind, as the original source of motion in Anaxagoras's

theory, brings order and limit to matter: but it is an order within the domain of the perishable beings.

MIND, THE SOURCE OF LIMIT

The overriding principle of the matter in Anaxagoras's original mixture is that it is without limit. To be infinite is to lack a first or last term. "For in small there is no least, but only a lesser: for it is impossible that Being should not be; and in Great there is always a Greater" (frag. 3). Matter without limits, as Parmenides correctly understood, cannot properly enjoy the title of true being. Parmenides imposed limits on matter in its eternal aspect; but Anaxagoras has reversed that equation. For Anaxagoras, what is eternal is infinite, that is, less than being. All of the things mixed together in Anaxagoras's motionless state of nature cannot be disentangled from one another, nor distinguished from one another. In order for matter to obtain limits, in Anaxagoras's physics, it cannot perform this feat for itself. Mind, the supreme force in nature, is the agency which brings form to matter in Anaxagoras's model.

It would be inaccurate to suggest, as many commentators do, that the original particles in nature are their own agencies for local motion. The particles do not move themselves, as agents. They are rather moved by an outside agent: Mind is the cause of the movement, and the movement by which the different particles and qualities are separated off are passions of those bodies. Mind is not only the cause of the movement out of the unlimited, amorphous, motionless original mixture; it also becomes an active constituent in the bodies which are separated off into new groupings.

> Other things all contain a part of everything, but Mind is infinite and self-ruling, and is mixed with no thing, but is alone by itself. If it were not by itself, but were mixed with anything else, it would have had a share of all things, if it were mixed with anything; for in everything there is a portion of everything, as I have said before. And the things mixed with Mind would have prevented it, so that it could not rule over any Thing in the same way as it can being alone by itself. For it is the finest of all things, and the purest, and has complete understanding of everything, and has the greatest power. All things which have life, both the greater and the less, are ruled by Mind. . . . And the things which were mixed together, and separated off, and divided, were all understood by Mind. And whatever they were going to be, and whatever things were then in existence that are not now, and all things that now exist and whatever shall exist—all were arranged by Mind. (frag. 12, pp. 84–85)

Harold Cherniss, in his highly influential study of the pre-Socratics, takes Aristotle severely to task for the way he interprets the original state of nature in Anaxagoras. Aristotle, Cherniss indicates, is to blame for imposing his

own scheme of argument on top of the theories that he purports to report. The proper way to see Anaxagoras, Cherniss insists, is in that model of pluralism which we have been examining. The infinitely divisible particles, in Cherniss's analysis, should be esteemed irreducible Parmenidean bodies, and Aristotle is faulted for stretching the facts of evidence in order to make it prefigure his own theory of eternal matter as *potential* being. "Apart from the fact that he (Aristotle) could not carry out the system consistently, the fundamental assumption of his attempt was that the quantitative variations of a limited number of quantitatively different elements, in themselves unalterable, could account for the multiplicity of the phenomena."[25] "Aristotle's opposition rests upon his firm conviction that qualitative alteration cannot be explained by the juggling of inalterable quanta: his multiplication of objections really beclouds the issue."

Insofar as Anaxagoras is our focus, Cherniss's argument is incorrect. There are no inalterable quanta in Anaxagoras's mixture. There are no limited beings in the original mixture before the movement of Mind. Alteration, when it occurs in Anaxagoras's physics, is initiated by the agency of Mind. It is Mind which changes the unlimited particles of matter into limited, perishable beings. This is an absolutely pivotal point: for alteration, undertaken by the agency of Mind, in its movement of the passive, motionless, infinitely divisible particles of matter, gives to that matter qualities which it did not have on its own. Aristotle is not to be blamed for seeing, in Anaxagoras's original mixture, a precursor of his own theory of eternal matter as, not actual being, but potential being. This is an accurate representation of Anaxagoras's theory. It is incorrect to attribute "unalterable quanta" to Anaxagoras's theory, because Anaxagoras himself has denied their existence with his postulates.

Empedocles' theory is also improperly put with the pluralist ideology which we have been examining in this chapter. It is true that, for Empedocles, the ultimate particles of matter in nature are themselves limited. There is evidence, in any event, to claim that Empedocles intends for us to view his original natural constituents of air, fire, earth and water as irreducible particles. Yet the fact remains that these natural constituents are moved by principles of motion which have *different* limits.

The principles of love and hate, which Empedocles gives the status of irreducible natural elements right alongside the four species of matter, move the particles of matter in processes of mixture and separation, within which the particles of matter are passive and moved, rather than self-moving. It is love and hate which contain the limits, limits of combination and separation which impose new forms on the particles of matter. "But when great hate had been nourished in its limbs, and had rushed up into honor, when the time was fulfilled which, alternating, is fixed for them, love and hate, by a broad oath" (frag. 30, p. 56).

The principle of love, combination, reaches its limit when the boundaries between the distinct particles are no longer distinguishable. The principle of hate reaches the limit of its motion when the distinct types of matter are fully separated. Both of these principles produce generation, the production of limited forms of being, including living being, which is not a power vested in the particles of matter themselves.

It is clear that both Empedocles and Anaxagoras struggled with the prohibition on change which Parmenides' argument set forth. Empedocles' attempt to resolve that obstacle to qualitative alteration and generation is clearly unsatisfactory, and this is probably why Anaxagoras did not follow that course. In the case of Empedocles, one can argue that his fixing of inalterable limits on the particles of matter compete with the limits which his principles of love and hate seek to impose on matter. Anaxagoras however is not bound by that difficulty. For Anaxagoras has made the matter in its eternal form limitless, that is, available for the reception of limits from without.

Anaxagoras has removed the principal difficulty enforced by Parmenides' argument: the combination of the concept of eternal matter with the predicate of perfection. Nevertheless, there clearly are inconsistencies and defects in Anaxagoras's theory of mixture. If Anaxagoras held to his argument and its essential premises more strictly, there would be no identifiable particles in the original mixture of motionless nature. For the recognizable matter is formed or limited matter, which the doctrine of infinite divisibility has denied to the eternal matter antecedent to Mind's governance.

ANAXAGORAS ON MIXTURE

> How can hair come from not-hair, and flesh from not-flesh? (frag.10)

That which is infinitely divisible, that is, limitless in every aspect, cannot possibly be an element of anything. It is also clear that elements must precede a compound. Anaxagoras, in his effort to defeat Parmenides' argument that the eternal matter is perfect, denies determination to it. Yet Anaxagoras does not effectively proceed to the formation of elements, en route to the compounds that Mind mixes together.

An infinite quantity is not itself knowable. Since Anaxagoras has defined all of the material particles in his original state of mixed nature as infinite, none of them should be knowable at all. Anaxagoras though has affixed recognizable names to the parts of the original mixture: "For air and aether dominated all things, both of them being infinite. For these are the most important elements in the total mixture, both in number and in size" (Freeman, frag. 1, p. 83). Yet he has also put them into the parentheses of indistin-

guishability: "Before these things were separated off, all things were together, nor was any colour distinguishable, for the mixing of all things prevented this" (frag. 4). What is missing in Anaxagoras's theory is an intermediate step, the formation of the simple elements out of infinite matter: this is what Mind should have been first set to achieving, antecedent to the formation of compounds.

Anaxagoras does not do this. What he does is highly original, although also highly defective. The infinite has neither first nor last term. As such, it can never be knowable. Anaxagoras, in his theory, stipulates the existence of what the commentators, since Aristotle, call homeoemeries: flesh, bone, and the like. Now flesh and bone are not simple elements; they are mixtures of elements. Yet in Anaxagoras's theory, he has cast them into the role of elements which exist before the movement created by Mind.

If we attempt to reduce flesh and bone to simpler elements, we fall into the chasm of infinite divisibility: we are prevented from doing this. Yet Anaxagoras wishes us to accept the homeoemeries as elements, and he intends for us to accept that these combinations are then taken up by Mind for additional blending. Anaxagoras appears to be using the principle of infinite divisibility as a shield in this particular, as a defense against the Parmenidean attempt to deny the status of reality to perishable combinations. He will not allow us to proceed to smaller elements than the homeoemeries. What Anaxagoras does, as A. L. Peck figured out, is to make the first things in nature compounds. Anaxagoras sees that he cannot get from discrete elements, like the four roots of Empedocles, to the kind of mixture which characterizes reality. So he smuggles the mixture into the starting position. He does this by preventing us from ever arriving at a smaller element than the mixtures. "But, thought Anaxagoras, flesh cannot arise in this way, because none of its components would be flesh: flesh would have arisen out of not-flesh. Flesh must therefore be pronounced an element in its own right, not a mere mixture."[26]

Aristotle tells us the following about the elements in Anaxagoras's theory. "Now Anaxagoras opposes Empedocles' view of the elements. Empedocles says that fire and earth and the related bodies are elementary bodies of which all things are composed; but this Anaxagoras denies. His elements are the homoeomerous things, viz. flesh, bone, and the like."[27] Flesh and bone exist, in Anaxagoras's system, before Mind has undertaken any "separating off." This proves that, for Anaxagoras, the argument of infinite divisibility is also, in part, designed to effect a thorough combination such as the Parmenidean prohibition on qualitative alteration would arrest.

Guthrie believed that Anaxagoras had actually taken Greek physics another step along the way to atomism: to the physics where indestructible and irreducible bodies, which by definition cannot alter or truly be combined, are the real bodies.[28] This view cannot be Anaxagoras's intention or effect.

Anaxagoras, admittedly, has presented a confused and problematic account of why and how thorough and full mixtures occur and come about; one can even say that his doctrine of infinite divisibility seeks to dodge *this* issue. Yet the thrust of his argument is to deny that the compound bodies can be reduced to discrete particles in combination and separation. It is effectively compounded elements which are separated off pursuant to further combinations. There never is an opportunity in Anaxagoras's physics for uncompounded elements to become one from many, or to become many from one.

NOTES

1. See Daniel Graham, "Empedocles and Anaxagoras: Responses to Parmenides," in *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy*, ed. A. A. Long (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 165–66; and A. P. D. Mourelatos, "Quality, Structure and Emergence in Later Presocratic Philosophy," *Proceedings of the Boston Area Colloquium in Ancient Philosophy* 2 (1986): 128–29.

2. A. H. Coxon, *The Fragments of Parmenides* (Wolfeboro: Van Gorcum, 1986), 60, 64. All quotations from Parmenides' fragments in this chapter will be from Coxon's translation. My references should be read as follows: 8:2–3, indicates fragment 8, lines 2–3.

3. W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 2, *The Presocratic Tradition from Parmenides to Democritus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 162–64.

4. M. R. Wright, *Empedocles: The Extant Fragments* (London: Bristol Press, 2001), 39.

5. Mourelatos, "Quality, Structure and Emergence," 177.

6. Graham, "Empedocles and Anaxagoras," 171–72.

7. Kathleen Freeman, *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers: A Complete Translation of the Fragments in Diels, Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996; first printing 1948). "Empedocles," frag. 2, p. 51. All of the fragments from Empedocles, Anaxagoras, and Anaximander cited in this chapter come from Freeman's translation of Diels's fragments unless otherwise noted.

8. Mourelatos has noticed this language in Empedocles, and he has correctly inferred that this represents a serious difference between his theory and that of Parmenides. See Mourelatos, "Pre-Socratic Origins of the Principle That There Are No Origins from Nothing," *Journal of Philosophy* 78 (1981): 659. "Deployment, or even mention, of Parmenides' injunction against 'what is not' is not found in the rest of Empedocles' fragments either. True, in B8 and B9 we have Empedocles' famous critique of the ordinary language of birth and death, but the contrast with Parmenides is, even there, more significant than the similarity. . . . What we need is proof that there is not even a single occurrence of the perishing of even a tiny bit." Mourelatos, for his part, believes that certain elements in Parmenides' argument can be brought to bear against Empedocles' claims, so as to bring Empedocles, in this manner, into a clear alignment with the Eleatic argument. Cf. Mourelatos, "The Real, Appearances and Human Error in Greek Philosophy," *Review of Metaphysics* 19 (1965). See page 353, note 21: "A close examination of the language of the fragments reveals that Empedocles employs a wide spectrum of expressions for mixture, ranging from the idea of mere mechanical juxtaposition to that of complete fusion, viz. 'standing together,' 'falling together,' 'converging,' 'congealing together,' or 'coalescing,' 'fitting together,' 'gluing,' 'moulding,' 'mixing,' 'blending.'"

9. A. A. Long, "Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle in the Sixties," in *The Pre-Socratics*, ed. Alexander P. D. Mourelatos (New York: Anchor, 1974), 404.

10. Long, "Empedocles' Cosmic Cycle in the Sixties," 412. For representatives of the view that Long disputes, consult D. O'Brien, "Empedocles Revisited," *Ancient Philosophy* 15 (1995): 403–70, and Catherine Osborne, "Empedocles Recycled," *The Classical Quarterly* 37 (1987): 240–50.

11. Aristotle, *On Generation and Corruption*, vol. 1, trans. H. H. Joachim, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 333a18–334a2. Also see Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, vol. 2, trans. W. D. Ross in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 985a28–985b3. I have also consulted Thomas Aquinas on this point, in *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, trans. Richard J. Blackwell, Richard J. Spath, and W. Edmund Thielkel (Notre Dame, IN: Dumb Ox, 1995), 39–40.

12. *Metaphysics* 1000a25–1000b22.

13. Mourelatos, "Quality, Structure and Emergence," 128–29.

14. Montgomery Furth, "A Philosophical Hero? Anaxagoras on the Eleatics," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 9 (1991): 101.

15. Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy*, 2:271.

16. David Furley, "Anaxagoras in Response to Parmenides," in *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy*, ed. John P. Anton and Anthony Preus (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), 2:80, 86.

17. Francis Cornford, "Anaxagoras' Theory of Matter," in *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy*, vol. 2, *The Eleatics and the Pluralists*, ed. David Furley and R. E. Allen (New York: Humanities Press, 1975), 276.

18. Graham, "Empedocles and Anaxagoras," 166–67.

19. Robert Wardy, "Eleatic Pluralism," *Archiv fur Geschichte der Philosophie* 70 (1988): 125–26. The emphasis is from Wardy.

20. The quoted phrase is from Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics*, trans. John Rowan (Notre Dame, IN: Dumb Ox, 1999), 192.

21. Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics*, 193.

22. John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 4th ed. (New York: Meridian, 1965), 264.

23. Cornford, "Anaxagoras' Theory of Matter," 311, 313–14.

24. Gregory Vlastos, "The Physical Theory of Anaxagoras," in *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy*, vol. 2, *The Eleatics and the Pluralists*, ed. David Furley and R. E. Allen (New York: Humanities Press, 1975), 329–30.

25. Harold Cherniss, *Aristotle's Criticism of Presocratic Philosophy* (New York: Octagon Press, 1971), 104–6.

26. A. L. Peck, "Anaxagoras: Predication as a Problem in Physics I," *The Classical Quarterly* 25 (1931): 33.

27. *On the Heavens*, trans. J. L. Stocks, 302a28–302b8. Also see *On Generation and Corruption*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 314a1–315a25.

28. Guthrie, *History of Greek Philosophy*, 2:152.

Chapter Four

Plato's Socrates and His Theory of Causation

In classical studies today, the entire period of pre-Socratic philosophy is to a large extent examined through the lens of Parmenidean physics. A major reason for this development is an extended attempt to represent Plato's Socrates himself as a direct descendent of Eleatic doctrine. This is troubling insofar as Plato's Socrates not only defeats the Eleatic doctrine, but also due to the fact that he obliges scientific philosophy to respect the ordinary assignment of name to object as its own original, binding evidence, the very birth of its own enterprise.

Parmenides founds a philosophic account of truth which wholly negates, rejects, and dismisses the evidentiary value of ordinary opinions. Plato's Socrates founds a science which actually originates out of, and regards as foundational, the same ordinary opinions. The claim that Plato descends from the Parmenidean thesis, that the Platonic forms are Parmenidean in character, is the claim that over the following three chapters we will attempt to refute and disprove.

In Parmenides' doctrine, ordinary speakers are portrayed as bereft of the most rudimentary knowledge. "But next I debar you from that way along which wander mortals knowing nothing, two-headed, for perplexity in their bosoms steers their intelligence astray, and they are carried along as deaf as they are blind, amazed, uncritical hordes, by whom to be and not to be are regarded as the same and not the same, and for whom in everything there is a way of opposing stress."[1] For the goddess, the ordinary opinions involve "no true reliability" (frag. 1). Parmenides' goddess indicates that the perishable objects regarded as most real by ordinary thinkers are little more than delusions. "Therefore all things that mortals have established, believing in their

truth, are just a name: Becoming and Perishing, Being and Not-Being, and change of position, and alteration of bright color" (frag. 8, p. 44).

The case is quite different in Plato. Plato's Socrates, after a long career of argument and study, is convinced of two things. First, that the ordinary assignment of name to object or action involves a very fundamental kind of knowing, and secondly, that no valid science is possible which does not build off of this foundation by which ordinary speakers and philosophers both recognize the what-ness of objects and actions.

Socrates, a number of influential commentators claim, regards the ordinary opinions as defective, accidental, contradictory, or fraudulent. Like Parmenides, they allege, Socrates regards true knowledge and true objects of knowledge as aloof from ordinary experience. These scholars represent Plato's Socrates as intimately bound up with Eleatic philosophy, as effectively brought into existence through Parmenides' thesis about being.

Charles Kahn says that "despite the silence of Aristotle, there can be little doubt of the importance of Parmenides as an influence on Plato's thought. If it was the encounter with Socrates that made Plato a philosopher, it was the poem of Parmenides that made him a metaphysician. In the first place it was Parmenides' distinction between being and becoming that provided Plato with the ontological basis for his theory of forms."[2] "Despite Aristotle's testimony, every modern historian knows that the metaphysical background for Plato's theory of forms is provided not by the Pythagoreans but by Parmenides."[3]

In the view of J. Hintikka, "the affinity of Plato's way of thinking to that of Parmenides is well known. In the *Theaetetus* 183e it prompts him to express his great admiration for 'the father of dialectic.' No wonder, for it does not appear too far-fetched to say that Plato's own main proof for the existence of forms is forged of precisely the same materials as Parmenides' reasons for announcing his fundamental doctrine: that 'one can only think of what is.'"[4]

Alexander Nehamas offers an account of Plato's theory of forms as something that indicts, contradicts, and refutes the ordinary assignment of name to object. In the view of Plato that Nehamas advances, ordinary speakers do not have the capacity to correctly assign name to perishable object; in Nehamas's account of Plato, no perishable object can actually have the pattern or form which ordinary language indicates by its names. Nehamas writes, of his own essays on Plato, that "many of them, perhaps most of them, address in one way or another and from different points of view a single problem that I now see is absolutely central to Plato's philosophical project. That is the problem of establishing—in ethics, in metaphysics, and in the philosophy of art—the difference between what is authentic and what is fake, what is genuine and what is at best only an imitation."[5] "The theory of forms, as I interpret it here, depends on the assumption that nothing is authentically beautiful unless

it is the very nature of beauty: nothing is authentically large unless it is the very nature of largeness; nothing is authentically equal unless it is the very nature of equality. Plato, following Parmenides, who had convinced two generations of philosophers before him, understood the simple term 'is,' which connects subject and predicate in a sentence like 'equality is equal' as the complex notion of 'what it is to be'" (xxxiv). "Plato does not believe, as we saw Vlastos claim earlier, that a property has the property it is, but that only the very nature of equality can, on this understanding of 'being,' be truly, genuinely, or authentically equal."

These scholars who insist that Plato is a theorist born of Eleatic loins maintain that Plato's Socrates holds ordinary opinions to be errant, scattershot, and confused when they refer to an object such as a cow or a tree, or when they refer to an object such as equal, large, or tall. Perishable objects, on such a view, could not possibly fulfill the standard of embodying the "very nature" of cow-ness, tree-hood, equality, or largeness. Parmenides, if these scholars are correct, taught Plato that the only real being is that being which has its being absolutely and perfectly, and for this reason, these scholars say, Plato regards the perishable objects as defective, as unreliable guides to the true beings, which are, according to these commentators, only the isolated, eternal forms themselves.

As Gregory Vlastos describes it:

> Here I shall be content to bring out what is, at any rate, a part of what he means—the part that can be plotted by tracking down the answer to the following question: what could his forms or ideas have in common with real gold, real coffee, real courage, and real beauty, in contrast to debased gold, adulterated coffee, feeble or feigned courage, coarse, brittle, or superficial beauty? Two things, I suggest: in the first place, in all of these examples, the real F would be the cognitively reliable F. Thus, if you want to investigate the nature of gold, coffee, courage or beauty, you must look to the genuine article; the other kind will trick you sooner or later, for along with some-F properties, it has also perhaps cunningly concealed, some not-F properties, and if you were to take the latter for the former your mistake would be disastrous. In the second place, the real F would be the reliably valuable one, the kind of thing that brings fully and durably the satisfaction an F-thing can be counted on to yield, instead of a spurious, or at best, an inferior satisfaction, falling far short of the one you are after, or would be, if you had known the real F.[6]

Let us make some preliminary observations. In the science of definition advanced by Plato's Socrates, this science is entirely founded upon the prior validity of the ordinary assignment of name to object. In Plato's philosophy, nothing achieved in the definition of the isolated forms can possibly cast shadows upon the ordinary use of names insofar as this involves recognition of patterns in perishable objects. The science of definition in Plato, this is to say, itself arises out of the prior way of knowing which enables the ordinary

speakers to correctly assign name to object. *That* a perishable object is a cow, or equal, or large, Plato's philosopher will not dispute an ordinary speaker, under the terms of the profession of ignorance. However, the distinction between a form as an *image*—and a form as an isolated object investigated critically by intellect, involves transforming image-recognition in memory into a definition of speech. The movement from image to definition, from memory to full comprehension, is a difficult one, and while not all ordinary speakers will be able to make that trip, and few will even want to—this process of translating the images into definitions never upsets the original assignment of name to object that the ordinary opinions produce. The distinction between a form as image and a form as definition does not involve this distinction that Nehamas and Vlastos talk about, one between the "authentic" and the "fake."

There is no form in Plato's philosophy which is not originally named by ordinary speakers, and Plato never comes in between the ordinary recognition of the forms, and the hypothesis that he adds to these: which stipulates the separate existence of the isolated form. The images of the forms in the perishable objects remain the road to the hypothesis which reveals Plato's science, but the form that is to be defined, which is to be investigated in speech, is still the form originally discovered and recognized in natural language as image.

SOCRATES AND ANAXAGORAS

The Socrates presented by Plato enjoyed an early philosophical career deeply immersed in studies of natural science. Socrates' interests, Plato tells us, fully extended to the perishable objects and their coming into being. In Plato's writings, we are told that Socrates had "an extraordinary passion for that branch of learning which is called natural science." In the *Phaedo*, Socrates recollects that "I thought it would be marvelous to know the causes for which each thing comes and ceases and continues to be" (91a, *Phaedo*). It is the writings of Anaxagoras which most excited Socrates during his youthful excursions into natural science.

Anaxagoras is a researcher into causation as it pertains to natural body. More importantly, it is Anaxagoras who first makes a connection between intelligence and cause in nature. Socrates develops the theory of cause in a different way than Anaxagoras does, but it is relevant to note that for Socrates, the objects to be explained remain the perishable bodies which have always been the preeminent concern of Ionian science.

Greek thinkers beginning with Thales attempt to ascertain an original source out of which the perishable bodies come to be, but this enterprise is

properly seen as a study of the origins of the objects most familiar to us. When we delve into the furthest dimensions of cause which culminate in the observable genesis, such studies always retain their own justification in our wonder at the objects that we most familiarly observe.

It is Anaxagoras who first discerns a role of Mind in nature. "For it is the finest of all things and the purest, and has complete understanding of everything, and has the greatest power."[7] "And the things that were mixed together, and separated off, and divided, were all understood by Mind" (frag. 12). It is the reflections of Anaxagoras rather than those of Parmenides which Plato's Socrates focuses on. "However, I once heard someone reading from a book, as he said, by Anaxagoras, and asserting that it is mind that produces order and is the cause of everything. This explanation pleased me. Somehow it seemed right that mind should be the cause of everything, and I reflected that if this is so, mind in producing order sets everything in order and arranges each individual thing in the way that is best for it" (97c).

This passage in the *Phaedo* is as important as any in Plato's writings. It calls our attention to the truly formative intellectual events of Socrates' life in terms of philosophy and the study of nature. The majority of commentators tell us that, upon finding Anaxagoras's theory of intelligence in nature to be incomplete and inadequate, Socrates at that point must have turned away from nature studies, and in Parmenidean style, dismissed the perishable objects from the foundation of his inquiries.

David Sedley writes that "Socrates has no theories of his own about the structure and nature of the physical world."[8] The Socrates of the *Phaedo*, he argues, "is made to symbolize the rejection of presocratic physics" (161). "He not only rejected existing (Anaxagorean-style) reductionist physics as a route to knowledge, but also saw that even an improved physics, along the lines of a reformed atomism, could never, in principle, be the basis of knowledge" (173). According to Vlastos, the Socrates in Plato's early dialogues is "a moral philosopher, pure and simple. He has views on many topics, but the only propositions he investigates elenctically are moral ones."[9] Even W. K. C. Guthrie portrays Plato's Socrates as a thinker who, after disappointments connected with Anaxagorean theory, "gave up science for ethics, the study of nature for the pursuit of practical principles."[10]

These arguments are wide of the mark. The path taken by Plato's Socrates is a *development*, rather than a rejection, of Anaxagorean physics. Anaxagoras makes the step by recognizing intelligent order as a cause. This shifts the focus of physics: what once had been the study into the origins of matter newly becomes an inquiry into the recognition and understanding of order and form. The object of physics, for Plato's Socrates, is something intelligible—that is, something we *understand* but do not stop to think about. There is nothing overtly moralistic in this new teaching, and the last thing that is involved in Plato's philosophy of knowledge is a turning away from

our perceptual evidence of objects. To be sure, in order for scientific definition to be possible, we must add a hypothesis to a single form, and abstract from the perishable objects in which we have identified and named it, but without that original naming based upon recognition and images, we would have no firm knowledge about a form to so much as fasten a hypothesis to. Intellectual investigation is potentially vastly more powerful than recognition of images through memory; but Plato's philosopher is attempting to master a kind of intelligence that is operative in the ordinary use of names.

The scientific knowledge that Plato's Socrates pursues involves calling attention to a knowledge which human beings possess so effortlessly as to fail to recognize that it actually is knowledge: we refer here to our ability to assign name to object. Objects are horses, clouds, water, and fire, but also diffidence, courage, quickness, and justice. The untrained thinker uses a single name many times in the course of a day. He indicates more than one road, more than one cup, many human beings, dogs, and slownesses. A single name that is appropriately assigned to numerous objects is evidence that Socrates fastens upon as an indication of intelligible order which must underlay the ordinary use of names. That there are many human beings that we identify indicates that the name corresponds to a pattern or form: a universal is latent in the particulars that we assign names to, and what is more than particular, is the form that we remember.

Ordinary speakers, as both Parmenides and Plato indicate, are stubbornly respectful of the boundaries that exist between opposite forms. We do not use opposite names to characterize the same object, strictly speaking. In the following chapter, focused on the *Parmenides*, it will be possible to examine this issue in detail. Parmenides himself comments on just how insistent ordinary speakers are in this regard. For Parmenides, the ordinary speaker's stubborn determination to keep the opposite forms separate, his denial that the opposite names can apply equally to the same object in the same sense, constitutes an indictment. "They have established the custom of naming two forms, one of which ought not to be mentioned: that is where they have gone astray. They have distinguished them as opposite in form, and have marked them off from another by giving them different signs" (frag. 8). Plato, however, embraces the principle of the ordinary speakers, and relies upon this as an arch principle of thought. "Is not the holy always one and the same thing in every action, and again, is not the unholy always opposite to the holy, and like itself? And as unholiness does it not always have its one essential form, which will be found in everything that is unholy?" (*Euthyphro* 5d). "It is obvious that the same thing will never do or suffer opposites in the same respect in relation to the same thing and at the same time. So that if ever we find these contradictions in the functions of the mind we shall know that it was not the same thing functioning but a plurality" (*Republic* 436bc).

It is Plato's view that natural languages are based upon names of forms or patterns: that is, names that we use repeatedly to refer to a limitless number of individual objects, which have a share in the respective form. For Plato, not only do ordinary speakers recognize something real when they assign name to object in their daily business: within certain broad parameters, it is actually an indisputable kind of knowledge that the ordinary use of names involves.[11]

Plato's Socrates is focusing upon two aspects of a single causation: we name objects after the form that they share in, and objects are what they are *because* they have that form. The intelligence that Anaxagoras speaks of in nature is a force that undertakes the mixtures and combinations that compose assorted objects. The defects in Anaxagoras's explanations, however, cause Socrates to probe still further, especially into the way in which ordinary speakers are able to talk so easily about readily identifiable patterns and forms, such as make each object what it is.

For Plato's Socrates that which "causes" an object to be what it is, is nothing more nor less than the form which it is *of*. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates explains his theory of cause. Why is something "two"? Why is an object "beautiful"? *That* an object is two, *that* it is beautiful, is the equal observation of Socrates and the ordinary speakers, *as* ordinary perceivers and speakers. Socrates, however, unlike the ordinary speakers, can provide a defense of his naming practice which the ordinary speaker does not possess. An object is two, Socrates states, simply and essentially because it participates in the form of duality: it is the form which we recognize, the pattern that we "know," even on the level of images.

> It seems to me that whatever else is beautiful apart from absolute beauty is beautiful because it partakes of that absolute beauty, and for no other reason. Well, now, that is as far as my mind goes; I cannot understand these other ingenious theories of causation. If someone tells me that the reason why a given object is beautiful is that it has a gorgeous color or shape or any other such attribute, I disregard all these other explanations—I find them all confusing—and I cling simply and straightforwardly and no doubt foolishly to the explanation that the one thing that makes that object beautiful is the presence in it or association with it, in whatever way the relation comes about, of absolute beauty. I do not go so far as to insist upon the precise details—only upon the fact that it is by beauty that beautiful things are beautiful. This, I feel, is the safest answer for me or for anyone else to give, and I believe that while I hold fast to this I cannot fall; it is safe for me or for anyone else to answer that it is by beauty that beautiful things are beautiful. (100ce)

There is some scholarship which supports the view advanced here, at least in part. Ian Mueller writes that "Socrates begins with a desire to understand nature: natural being, natural coming to be, natural ceasing to be. He never abandons that goal. What he abandons is an approach to nature which I have

labeled 'materialistic.'"[12] C. C. W. Taylor writes that Socrates continues to investigate natural causes in his emerging discussions in the Platonic dialogues. "We can't say that he substitutes logical for causal necessity, since he fails to distinguish the two. We have to be content saying that he thought that the possession of the property to be explained had to be shown to be necessitated by the presence of some explanatory entity. But this is insufficient to distinguish Plato's method from those of his predecessors."[13]

In a casual manner of speaking, one thinks of a cause as something material and obvious. A man maneuvering a pool cue causes a ball to move over the surface of a pool table. Anaxagoras's idea of cause, as in the divine overseer mixing elements and bringing about natural beings, is yet a cause like that of the pool cue. Socrates, however, has taken this notion of intelligence in nature to heart in an entirely new way. Socrates develops the insight that the ordinary ability to use names, as well as the very structure of natural languages, *disclose* a causation: we recognize objects, and it is what we recognize that we name. It is in this way that learning is a process of "recollection" for Plato's Socrates.

PLATO'S SOCRATES AND THE SOPHISTS

The sophist philosopher-rhetoricians constitute a huge influence on Plato's Socrates and his doctrinal development. On this broad point commentators agree. However, a great trouble emerges in the course of this scholarly conversation. For the secondary literature does not advance a satisfying account of what the sophist doctrine effectively *is*. As a consequence, the representation of the sophist influence on Socrates is significantly distorted.

There are perhaps three main lines of argument in the secondary literature as regards the sophist project. First, scholars identify the sophists as a philosophical reaction against Parmenides' unity of Being. The sophists, these scholars say, rebel against the Parmenidean indictment of perception and perceptual faculties. Second, and in a related sense, the sophists are portrayed as practical fellows: as thinkers who are mostly concerned about the government of public discourse in terms of individual pleasures and pains. A fair amount of commentators who advance either of the above two views, also characterize the sophists as immoralists, or as inadequately concerned with loftier things such as virtue.

It seems that these views are incorrect, and the first major error is the belief that the sophists are antagonistic to, rather than beneficiaries of, Eleatic argument. There is a symmetry between the doctrine of perception laid down in Parmenides' doxa, and the thesis of perception set forth by Protagoras. In both instances, the doctrines are designed to allow the individual to use

names in public speech in a manner of his or her choosing: this is to say, the referential function of names to the common external objects is suppressed. In the doxa, Parmenides' goddess says: "For according to the mixture of much-wandering limbs which each man has, so is the mind which is associated with mankind; for it is the same thing which thinks, namely the constitution of the limbs in men, all and individually; for it is excess which makes thought" (Freeman, frag. 16, p. 46). Thus Protagoras: "Of all things the measure is man, of the things that are, that they are, and of the things that are not, that they are not" (Freeman, frag. 1, p. 125).

The doctrine of perception laid out in both the doxa and in Protagoras's famous maxim effects a radical break with the evidence of ordinary sense perception and with the ordinary assignment of name to object. In fact, the Protagorean doctrine is every bit as much a radical break with the ordinary speakers as is that of the Eleatic "way of truth." Accordingly, there is no true alignment between sophist doctrines and the interests of common sense. Scholars routinely talk about the sophists as architects of democratic consensus, as defenders of common sense or practical knowledge as against abstract and purely philosophic knowledge. Jaap Mansfield states that "Protagoras' technique of argument and discussion as grounded in his espistemology is a marvelous instrument for bringing about a consensus; and a consensus, after all, is what is necessary if a political body such as the Athenian democracy is to function, and the art of bringing it about is indispensable to any person with political ambitions."[14]

H. D. Rankin argues that "Protagoras is supposed to have written a book against the Eleatic view of the unity of Being. There is nothing in what we know of his work to suggest that Eleatic ontology would hold any attraction for him. Gorgias pulled against the bonds of the Eleaticism in his own individual way, by reversing the polarity, as it were, of the Eleatic ontological proposition" (31).[15] Guthrie also endorses this view. "One branch of Presocratic philosophy had a profound influence on sophistic as on all other Greek thought: the extreme monism of Parmenides and his followers. Its challenge to the evidence of the senses, and rejection of the whole sensible world as unreal, inspired a violent reaction in the empirical and practical minds of the sophists, who opposed it in the name of common sense."[16] "Protagoras, we are told, took time off from teaching political arête to write a work on Being which was directed against 'those who uphold the unity of Being,' and Gorgias in his *On Non-Being* showed his mastery of Eleatic argument by turning it against its inventors. Yet the sophists could not, any more than other pretenders to serious thought, brush aside the Eleatic dilemma, which forced a choice between being and becoming, stability and flux, reality and appearance. Since it was no longer possible to have both, the sophists abandoned the idea of a permanent reality behind appearances, in favor of an extreme phenomenalism, relativism and subjectivism" (47).

Fragments from Gorgias's writings indicate that he taught his students even more involved aspects of the Eleatic doctrine than Protagoras had. Among Gorgias's postulates are the following:

> If anything exists, it is incomprehensible. If it is comprehensible, it is incommunicable. Nothing exists. If anything exists, it must be either Being or not-Being, or both Being and not-being. It cannot be not-Being, for not-Being does not exist; if it did, it would be at the same time Being and not-Being, which is impossible. It cannot be Being, for Being does not exist. If Being exists, it must be either everlasting, or created, or both. It cannot be everlasting; if it were, it would have no beginning, and therefore would be boundless; if it is boundless, then it has no position, for if it had position it would be contained in something, and so it would no longer be boundless; for that which contains is greater than that which is contained, and nothing is greater than the boundless.[17]

In the view presented earlier, Parmenides' "way of truth" is nothing more than an instrument of disorientation for interlocutors. Entangling interlocutors in a complete muddle, and sewing up their mouths thereby, paves the way for the goddess's doctrine in the doxa where philosophic force of will shall carry the day in the public use of names. Gorgias's adaptation of Eleatic argument above seems to function in much the same way. W. J. Verdenius well notices this aspect of Gorgias's teaching. "Gorgias based his art of rhetoric on two principles, viz. (1) persuasion is a form of deception, and (2) the cogency of a speech depends largely on its poetic qualities. The first principle follows from his theory of knowledge: the true nature of things is beyond our grasp."[18]

WHY PLATO'S SOCRATES IS NOT A MORALIST

The mistaken association of sophist teachers with the preoccupations of ordinary self-interest and sense perception foment a much more egregious error: the belief that the transcendent enterprise of Plato's Socrates is the moral improvement of his interlocutors. The logic and function of Socrates' profession of ignorance is the decisive point here: commentators indicate that Socrates, with his profession of ignorance, throws to the side all preoccupations with the truth about the external objects and what they are; what he is really interested in, the commentators suggest, is the moral pretentiousness in his interlocutors, insofar as they believe themselves to possess any actual knowledge about anything. If Socrates can puncture the ordinary speakers' confidence in the modest knowledge that they believe themselves to possess, these commentators reason, then this is the road toward the moral purification that Socratic dialogues aim at.

Vlastos develops a theory of Plato's Socrates in the early dialogues as exclusively a moral philosopher. Socrates' profession of ignorance, in Vlastos's analysis, involves the denial that any individual can have certain knowledge about the perishable objects that ordinary speakers refer to and indicate. Vlastos is emphatic in his claim that the Socrates in Plato's early dialogues has no theory of knowledge whatsoever unless the subject matter is morality. If he seems to refer to objects which appear similar to the forms spoken of in the *Republic*, Vlastos says, this is entirely an accidental appearance. At the same time, Vlastos states, Plato's Socrates is quite persuaded that he possesses moral knowledge of an a priori kind—just the sort of knowledge that we have seen Socrates take to task in the utterances of Polus and Gorgias:

> When he professes to have no knowledge he both does and does not mean what he says. He wants it to assure his hearers that in the moral domain there is not a single proposition he claims to know with certainty. But in another sense of "knowledge," where the word refers to justified true belief—justifiable through the peculiarly Socratic method of elenctic argument—there are many propositions that he does claim to know. So too, I would argue, Socrates' parallel disavowal of teaching should be understood as a complex irony. In the conventional sense, where to "teach" is simply to transfer knowledge from a teacher to a learner's mind, Socrates means what he says: that sort of teaching he does not do. But in the sense which he would give to "teaching"—engaging would-be learners in elenctic argument to make them aware of their own ignorance and enable them to discover for themselves the truth the teacher had held back—in that sense of "teaching" Socrates would want to say that he is a teacher, the only true teacher; his dialogue with his fellows is meant to have, and does have, the effect of evoking and assisting their own effort at moral self-improvement.[19]

> The search for those general properties of forms which distinguish them systematically from non-forms is never on his eclectic agenda. He asks: What is the form piety? What is the form beauty? And so forth. What is form? he never asks. He is perplexed about many things, but never about the fact that what there is contains forms. He is never touched with wonder that such things as forms should be. He banks on their reality with the same unreflective, unexamined, unargued, undefended assurance with which the man in the street banks on the reality of the trees and stones. (59)

> A belief is not a theory if everyone's agreement with it can be presumed as a matter of course—if it is unproblematic for everyone, in need of explanation and justification for no one. (59)

It is true that ordinary speakers do not doubt the reality of the objects they indicate to be trees. Socrates does not doubt their existence either. They are trees. In Vlastos's own theory of knowledge, the philosopher claims to know something antecedent to these perishable objects and the forms which they share in: that his perceptions cannot be regarded as providing direct knowl-

edge about any such objects. Protagoras's "every man the measure" makes an identical argument. Socrates' profession of ignorance, however, is not an unsophisticated instrument, nor is it a preparation for moral purification.

Plato's Socrates does not engage his interlocutors in question and answer about "what is a form?" because form is an abstract object. The idea of the form is something that Socrates can reach with the interlocutor, once a succession of different objects have been enumerated which all bear the same name. That the name indicates something discrete and single flies in the face of the separate, diverse character of the objects which bear the same name. "Form" is part of an analysis of what these names identify. The point is that for Socrates, the forms are not concoctions of theory: they can be demonstrated to exist in the least sophisticated speakers and the way they use names.

Terry Penner follows Vlastos, and says that in the early Platonic dialogues, the profession of ignorance is meant to unveil Socrates' moral convictions as the sure knowledge that he feels himself to possess. "My reply is that the claim to know nothing in no way implies that Socrates does not hold strong convictions about a great many ethical matters" (131). "This is that the whole point of the Socratic dialectic is to get people to see things for themselves, as a result of his refutations—and without their understanding being short-circuited by the device of giving them a new formula" (131).[20]

This point of view is failing to see what is actually going on in the discussions between Plato's Socrates and his interlocutors, both with sophists and non-sophists or ordinary speakers. It is not the interlocutor as immoralist that engages Socrates' attention. The issue that Socrates addresses in his debates with the sophists is in fact the same dispute that he will take up with Parmenides, and that issue is, upon what original evidence can discourse begin?

The foundation of the sophist power, as Plato's Socrates realizes, is repudiation of the authority of the ordinary use of names, and the modus operandi of the sophists is their esoteric teaching that one individual simply perceives unique objects, objects which nobody else can be said to perceive. Contra Francis Cornford, it is a secret and a subtle doctrine that sophists deploy, antecedent to converting names into instruments of victory in dispute.[21] In the sophist view, their use of words is not constrained by the factuality of the objects to which ordinary speakers refer.

Socrates certainly does not believe that he can compel the sophist to concede that the perishable objects everyone talks about are both known and commonly known. What he intends, through his profession of ignorance, is to illuminate for the audience this sophisticated immunity from such evidence that sophist rhetoricians claim for themselves and their use of words. For ordinary speakers as for philosophers, a snare noticed is a snare avoided. Such an exposure of the sophist doctrine will radically deflate the influence

of their educational program. When Socrates insists that he has no special knowledge, he is speaking very directly to the audience. Socrates is an "ordinary" person, like the non-philosophers in the audience, when it comes to adducing the original evidence of what justice, what courage, piety, or knowledge is, and Socrates expresses a common cause with the ordinary speakers, when he renounces any special, a priori philosophical knowledge which would trump or supersede theirs.

When Socrates utters his profession of ignorance, he is placing a magnifying glass over the sophist attempt to make common objects vanish as a precondition of discourse. The sophist, upon being confronted with Socrates' profession of ignorance, is not going to be able to glide easily into his self-allocated liberty in the use of names. For the audience, once it notices this premise of the sophist enterprise, is not going to be much affected by the sophist art of speech. The sophist is going to be bound by the ordinary use of names once the profession of ignorance has been set forth by Socrates, unless he formally excuses himself from the authority of the commonly recognized objects.

In the early pages of the *Gorgias*, when Socrates asks Gorgias and his associates to instruct us in the "what-is" of Gorgias's art, rhetoric, Polus takes up the mantle for the sophist cause. Polus states, "there are many arts, Chaerephon, among mankind experimentally devised by experience, for experience guides our life along the path of art, inexperience along the path of chance. And in each of these different arts different men partake in different ways, the best men following the best arts. And Gorgias here is one of the best and partakes in the noblest of arts" (448cd). Socrates is disappointed with this answer, for it does not address his question. "It is plain, Gorgias, that Polus is well equipped to make speeches, but he fails to accomplish what he promised to Chaerephon." "It seems that he does not quite answer the question asked." "Why, Polus, because when Chaerephon asks in what art Gorgias is proficient, you praise his art as though someone were attacking it, but neglect to answer what it is" (448e).

When Socrates is actually engaged in a discussion with Gorgias or Protagoras or Thrasymachus in Plato's dialogues, it is always the sophist who resorts to increasing decibels of praise and blame in order to advance a point of view. It is, then, in contradistinction to someone who is ladling out heavy doses of praise and blame that the profession of ignorance reveals its most devastating impact. The profession of ignorance does not ask what an object *ought* to be, or desires to be, or *should* be, or what we *hope* for it to be or *expect* for it to attempt to become: the profession of ignorance only asks *what* the object *is*. Thus, the profession of ignorance suspends impassioned discourse, and it does so in the attempt to elicit a common object for the assembled interlocutors.

The sophist's art, as Gorgias makes plain, is wholly dependent on appealing to the passions of the assembled citizens, in any forum whatsoever. The profession of ignorance, however, is equally focused on the assembled citizens, although in an opposite direction. When Socrates utters his profession of ignorance and asks his interlocutor, "what is holiness?" or "what is courage?" or "what is rhetoric?" he is asking to have the object pointed out to him. He is suspending the praising and blaming of names, and is instead asking for instruction on what the name indicates.

The profession of ignorance, when it is followed by the question "what is courage?" is asking to know what objects or actions are or have been courageous. The assembled speakers will all have some recollection and memory of brave actions or characters, and it is naturally these remembrances that they will think of. For the sophist, however, the profession of ignorance will shine a light of exposure on his Eleatic claims to a private perceptual object, to an object of perception which is not beholden to inspection by others and their agreement. This in fact is the entire source of the leverage that Socrates' arguments possess: for even if the sophist does not agree to abide by the ordinary use of names and to concede the reality of the objects that the assembled citizens indicate as most obviously real and true, the power of the sophist's rhetoric will begin to shrivel up and vanish.

In the *Laches*, the dialogue gets under way by informing us about two men who themselves hold famous names, who in turn wish for their sons to receive an education that is worthy of a great career. From this beginning, when the speakers have requested Socrates to discourse upon such an education, the conversation moves toward virtue and whether or not this can be taught. The *Laches* is not a dialogue driven by a powerful sophist. The interlocutors do not seek dominion over the use of words, but rather insight on how to deliver appropriate educations to their sons. Nevertheless, in this context, Socrates brings the original conversation to a halt. How can we begin to talk about the advantages of instructing pupils in virtue, Socrates wonders, before we have so much as established what virtue itself is?

"I would not have us begin, my friend, with inquiring about the whole of virtue, for that may be more than we can accomplish. Let us first consider whether we have a sufficient knowledge of a part: the inquiry will thus probably be made easier to us." "Then which of the parts of virtue shall we select? Must we not select that to which the art of fighting in armor is supposed to conduce? And is that not generally thought to be courage?" (190d) "Then Laches, suppose that we first set about determining the nature of courage, and in the second place proceed to inquire how the young men may attain this quality by the help of studies and pursuits. Tell me, if you can, what is courage" (190e).

In the *Euthyphro*, to refer to another one of the early dialogues, we have a conversation with only two interlocutors: Euthyphro and Socrates. In this

meeting, Socrates is leaving the law courts, whereas Euthyphro is en route to them. Socrates, for his part, has just been answering to a charge which has been filed against him by Meletus; the charge accuses Socrates of impiety, of teaching the young men things that are disrespectful of the sacred beliefs. Euthyphro, for his part, is traveling to the archon to make a charge against his own father. Euthyphro's father, in disciplining a slave who had committed a crime, imposed a punishment which resulted in the death of the slave, and Euthyphro is on his way to file the charge against his father.

Socrates, upon hearing of Euthyphro's mission, immediately lapses into statements about Meletus, Socrates' own accuser. Meletus, in accusing Socrates, certainly assumes himself to possess a sure knowledge of piety and things holy and unholy. Euthyphro, Socrates suggests, must also possess such a knowledge, for it is rather flying in the face of Athenian custom for a son to accuse his father, and indeed, it is only because Euthyphro believes himself to know the nature of piety better than the ordinary run of men that he is on his way to file charges. Socrates: "But you, by heaven! Euthyphro, you think that you have such an accurate knowledge of things divine, and what is holy and unholy, that, in circumstances such as you describe, you can accuse your father? You are not afraid that you yourself are doing an unholy deed?" Euthyphro: "Why, Socrates, if I did not have an accurate knowledge of all that, I should be good for nothing, and Euthyphro would be no different from the general run of men" (4e–5a).

At this point, Socrates professes his ignorance about piety, and asks Euthyphro to teach him what it is. This profession of ignorance is intended to leave to the side for a moment the assertions of impiety made by Meletus and Euthyphro, and to enumerate what is ordinarily regarded as holy and unholy. "Well then, admirable Euthyphro, the best thing I can do is to become your pupil, and challenge Meletus before the trial comes on."

In the two dialogues that we are examining, the *Laches* and the *Euthyphro*, the profession of ignorance leads to an enumeration of objects which have the pattern or form in question. In the *Laches*, a number of examples of courage are listed, and in the *Euthyphro*, once again, a variety of examples of piety are referred to. The point to be made here, is that Socrates does not subject *any* of the examples summoned forth *under the terms of the profession of ignorance* to cross-examination. The ordinary assignment of name to object, which is the operating principle of the examples provided, is accepted as unquestioned evidence. So far as they go (perceptual recognition of forms as images), the ordinary use of names is admitted into evidence. Ordinary speakers characterize objects as brave and cowardly, as cows and men, through the memory of a pattern that they have encountered before. It is these memories that Socrates wants to adduce as evidence, prior to embarking on an attempt to define the isolated form.

"That was my meaning when I said that I was to blame in having put my question badly, and that this was the reason of your answering badly. For I meant to ask you not only about the courage of the heavy-armed soldiers, but about the courage of the cavalry and every other style of soldier—and not only who are courageous in war, but who are courageous in perils by sea, and who in disease, or in poverty, or again in politics, are courageous, and not only who are courageous against pain or fear, but mighty to contend against desires and pleasures, either fixed in their rank or turning upon their enemy." "Now all these are courageous, but some have courage in pleasures and some in pains, some in desires and some in fears. And some are cowards in the same condition, as I should imagine." "I was asking about courage and cowardice in general. And I will begin with courage, and once more ask you what is that common quality, which is the same in all these cases, and which is called courage? Do you now understand what I mean?" (191d–e).

To Euthyphro, Socrates says: "So, in the name of heaven, tell me now about the matter you just felt sure you knew quite thoroughly. State what you take piety and impiety to be with reference to murder and all the other cases. Is not the holy always one and the same thing in every action, and again, is not the unholy always opposite to the holy, and like itself? And as unholiness, does it not always have its one essential form, which will be found in everything that is unholy?" (5d).

SOCRATES' DOCTRINE OF RECOLLECTION

The doctrine of recollection is presented by Socrates as a concomitant of ordinary perception and comprehension. The human being, when he or she assigns a name to a perceived object, is engaged in an intelligent action, an action which bespeaks *correct opinion* of some kind. Most, but not all of the scholarship makes this crucial connection between Socrates' theory of recollection and perceptual knowing, that is, opinion. Nobody disputes that memory of some kind is involved in this doctrine. What is disputed is the nature of this memory, and the role that it plays in the formulation of perceptual judgments, and how both of these factors relate to, or measure up against, the Socratic version of scientific definition.

The subtle and crucial relationship concerning the doctrine of recollection involves the soul itself, before its incarnation in a body, and the perceptual knowledge that is acquired by the soul in the body. Memory is the strong theme in both cases. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates speculates that the soul must have possessed all knowledge within itself before being compounded with a body. It would have this knowledge from past lives. However, at birth, the soul forgets all of this knowledge. There is no way for the soul to "remem-

ber" except by perception of the copies of the forms. Here then is an important point. Perception, in accordance with the Socratic doctrine of recollection, is the indispensable first introduction to knowledge that a compound of body and soul can have. The profession of ignorance, as discussed previously, consists in little more than in reminding people what they are remembering all of the time: that the objects they encounter are knowable only as distinct forms of object and actions.

It is a mistake to suggest, as Vlastos has, that the doctrine of recollection imports into the soul a knowledge that is inaccessible to ordinary faculties. This is not what Socrates argues, and such a view is not consistent with any of the major parts of Socrates' doctrine. Socrates' "what is?" questions invariably begin with our naming of the perishables. This holds in the account of wax block knowledge given in the *Theaetetus* (191c–195a), which Socrates there proclaims "utterly and absolutely to exclude the possibility of a false opinion" (192bc), and it squares with the account of knowledge in the divided line of *Republic* VI at 509–511. "And if it is true that we acquired our knowledge before our birth, and lost it at the moment of birth, but afterward, by the exercise of our senses upon sensible objects, recover the knowledge which we had once before, I suppose that what we call learning will be the recovery of our own knowledge, and surely we should be right in calling this recollection" (*Phaedo* 75e).

> We admit, I suppose, that there is such a thing as equality—not the equality of stick to stick and stone to stone, and so on, but something beyond all that and distinct from it—absolute equality. Are we to admit this or not? Simmias responds to this question from Socrates in the affirmative, and Socrates once again takes up the speech: "Where did we get our knowledge? Was it not from the particular examples that we mentioned just now? Was it not from seeing equal sticks or stones or other equal objects that we got the notion of equality, although it is something quite distinct from them?" (74bc)

How this memory that Socrates talks about is to be interpreted is complex, as there are different ways of knowing that memory is involved with. Certainly, the ordinary recognition of form in particulars involves recollection: an intelligent operation is performed. Yet the ordinary use of names does not involve any meditation on what those forms themselves involve. There is a kind of absentmindedness involved in the ordinary use of names, which only the exploration, in question and answer, of the content of the respective patterns can be said to reveal. This too is a kind of recollection, but not the same kind as one originally employs when assigning names to objects.

We should enumerate now some of the views that have gathered around the issue of recollection in the secondary literature. J. T. Bedu-Addo examines this issue of how perception and the soul's recollection are unfolded in Plato's argument. "A few pages later, however, in the argument for recollec-

tion (72e3–77a5) which forms the second half of the first proof for the immortality of the soul, Socrates claims apparently in flat contradiction to what he has just said about the worthlessness of the senses to the philosopher in his pursuit of knowledge, that, in fact, it is only through sense-experience, which we all do have right from the very moment of birth, that we recollect the forms, knowledge of which we acquired in a previous discarnate existence and forgot at the moment of birth." "Taking our knowledge of equality as an example, Socrates maintains that we know it, and that we derive our conception of it from no other source—indeed, to do so is impossible- than from sight or touch, or from some other one of the senses (74a9–75a7)."[22] Bedu-Addo argues, rightly in my view, as follows: "We can thus see that when Plato says in this argument that we derive our conception of the form equality from no other source than from sense experience, he is not really enunciating something that is at variance with what he says in other dialogues. He is expressing a view that derives from his conception of nature and the present condition of the human mind" (48).

Bedu-Addo indicates that perception itself might contain some sort of logical operation, through which we "derive our conception" of the object. This would not fit with Plato's model. There is no logical operation involved in recognition of the forms as images.

T. Ebert makes an argument that confuses the Socratic procedure of learning in Plato's dialogues. "What is hidden behind the metaphysical mythology of a prenatal vision of forms is in reality nothing other than the modern philosophical insight that there are concepts and truths which can never be formulated merely on the basis of sense perception, but which must be knowable independently of it, and which are logically prior to it; those of pure mathematics for example."[23] The argument made by Ebert is precisely what the profession of ignorance is designed to call out for public examination. In the profession of ignorance, Socrates forswears any special philosophical wisdom which could serve as the starting point for knowledge. This is the device that he will employ upon Parmenides and Protagoras both, to address their pretensions to secret knowledge: anyone who professed to possess such a knowledge as Ebert ascribes to Socrates would have to allow that he poured information into his students, since this is nothing that they have knowledge of themselves, and it is nothing that one can demonstrate to ordinary speakers that they in fact possess.

What perception offers to the soul is an image. Images can be learned through experience, in the sense that we will remember an image once we have encountered it. Yet this recognition is quite passive. It does not involve any penetrating analysis of the form. The form, as image, enables the constitution of natural languages, but recognition of forms is of little use against the sophist movement in education, which excels in question-and-answer disputation. Scientific definition of the forms is the goal made possible by

isolating the forms through the hypothesis that they exist independently and separately, but there is no defect in perceptual images, nor is there any logic in them, insofar as they are images and not reasoned definitions.

"Well, how do we stand now Simmias? If all these absolute realities such as beauty and goodness which we are always talking about, really exist, if it is to them, as we rediscover our own former knowledge of them, that we refer, as copies to their patterns, all the objects of our physical perception—if these realities exist, does it not follow that our souls must exist too even before our birth, whereas if they do not exist, our discussion would seem to be a waste of time?" (76e, *Phaedo*).

R. E. Allen and John Cooper have also made arguments about Socrates' doctrine of recollection in terms of a priori knowledge. It has been pointed out that according to Socrates, the soul, which must have possessed all knowledge prior to its existence in a particular body, forgets that knowledge at birth. Perception, not any sort of mysterious a priori knowledge, is what is said to awaken the soul. In the *Theaetetus*, this is made quite clear (cf. ch. 6 passim). In the arguments of Allen and Cooper, there is a certain Kantian claim that is being made. This is to say, Allen and Cooper ascribe to Socrates a Kantian theory of perception, which is just the sort of philosophic doctrine that the profession of ignorance is designed to expose and neutralize.

Let us only observe the following here as regards the Kantian theory of perception. The Kantian theory of perception is still beholden to the Parmenidean-Protagorean theory of perception. That is to say, Kant surrenders in argument to the claim that our perceptual faculties do not actually reach or comprehend external objects. The Kantian view involves the mind's projection of certain of its own powers to preformulate and lend order to sense experience from an otherwise unknowable external world.

According to Allen, the theory of anamnesis provides an answer to this problem: "It represents, in fact, an infant theory of the a priori. We may compare Plato's doctrine with that of Kant" (170). "It was Kant's goal to uncover the absolute presuppositions of experience, the a priori structures without which there could be no experience at all" (170).[24] "Because the objects of knowledge are independent of the physical world, and 'separate' from it, they cannot be known through it. Because there is a gulf between the forms and the particulars, the objects of knowledge and the objects of sense, we cannot, in knowing, pass directly from the latter to the former: passage presupposes prior knowledge. This is the core of the second argument for anamnesis in the *Phaedo*" (74b, p. 168). "The nucleus of the second argument for anamnesis is that knowledge of the forms is epistemically prior to knowledge of particulars" (169).

Allen is right when he claims that we cannot proceed directly from perceptual knowledge of the copies of the forms to scientific knowledge of the forms themselves. He is wrong, however, to say that according to Plato, we

know the forms before the perceived particulars. In the *Phaedo,* as in the divided line of *Republic* VI, there is one, and only one, move between the perceptible and the intelligible realms: the attachment of a hypothesis to the perceived copy of the form. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates is asked what causes a perishable object to be beautiful. His answer is that it is beautiful because it participates in the form of the beautiful. That is exactly the transition between the two halves of the divided line in the *Republic*, and it is perceptual knowledge which is the irreplaceable *first* step. To be able to recognize a form instantaneously *in* a perishable object, without taking the form itself for our object, is the sort of knowing forms that accompanies perception. In the *Theaetetus*, Plato insists that this recognition knowledge is infallible, and does not admit of false judgment, that is, in the case of the "wax block." But to expound upon a form in speech, in logos, to attempt to master the essence of the form in speech, is a wholly different undertaking, and the method for achieving that involves examining first the particulars in which one has (almost automatically) found the form to be copied.

Just to speak a bit more plainly here, it is forms that ordinary speakers name. The fact that ordinary speakers do not think of "cup" or "cruelty" or "dog" as forms does not interfere with the fact that it is forms that we are all always recognizing. One dog is "a" dog, not the only dog. The form as the recognizable "what-ness" of a perishable object is not identical to the form as an object of intellectual contemplation: but this distinction consists in our disposition toward the form, our attempt to address the form as an object for intellectual inquiry. Kant's theory of a priori categories of the mind, which include space and time, are theories which wreak havoc upon ordinary thinkers. No ordinary thinker believes that the reality of time is something that is relative to his or her own mind, or that his or her own mind projects a spatial quality upon an object.

John Cooper's discussion of sense perception in Plato makes the same type of claim that Allen offers. Cooper also ascribes to Plato's Socrates a Kantian species of perception. "On the view that I have been expounding, however, the contribution of the mind is not limited in this way. Its contribution is the appeal to objective standards, and it is only in connection with the existence of the objects of sensory awareness that the appropriate objective standards involve the referral of 'sense data' to the external world. In other cases, e.g. those of self identity and unity and the difference of a sound from a color, it would seem to be a law of logic that the mind invoked, and the fact that it is applied to objects of sensory awareness does not make it any the less something objectively valid."[25] "To judge that a color exists one must engage in the kind of calculation of past and present perceptions with a view to the future which Theaetetus mentions in connection with judgments of value; and just as Plato insists that judgments of value imply the existence of objective standards which experts constantly use to guide their thought, so one

must be guided by objective standards in saying how things in the world are" (143).

Dominic Scott, for the most part, follows the kind of argument made by Allen and Cooper. For Scott, even if the perceived objects are somehow correctly named, this perceptual knowledge is said to be a hindrance, a positive obstacle, to inquiries into the forms. "This difference should be noted: for Plato particular objects in the physical world do have the qualities that we attribute to them in sense perception, and so we can talk of these particular ideas being organized under universal concepts, whereas on the Cartesian theory the senses merely act as stimulus to the innate ideas, nor providing anything of their own as material of the thought."[26] "The sensible world, on this story, presents us with a huge number of unreliable opinions that we leave unquestioned. . . . Deep in our soul, however, lies the real message—our innate knowledge of the forms which can only be recovered if we remove the surface layer. This requires us first to be suspicious of the surface message, to be puzzled by the world of sense perception (like an astute Persian spycatcher might have been) and then to reject its claim to be reliable in favor of what lies underneath" (349).

The profession of ignorance as we have described it obliterates the role of expertise for recognizing examples of any particular form. The *Euthyphro*, *Laches*, and *Charmides*, but also part 1 in the *Parmenides*, all demonstrate how this works. It is only the movement from particular copies of the forms, to the form itself as an object of direct intellectual investigation, where the inexpert sight lovers of *Republic* V begin to hesitate. Up until that point, they have been in their own domain of opinion, indicating the beautiful sights and sounds, but uncomfortable with the proposition that there is such a thing as the beautiful itself. For this transition, expert knowledge is necessary, but the evidence from which this expert dialectic commences is inexpert and common.

One point that Allen, Cooper, and Scott help us to appreciate is the presence of something more than the bodily in accurate perceptual judgment. In both the *Phaedo* and the *Theaetetus*, Socrates instructs us that the senses are something the soul "uses" in its effort to know. Consciousness is unified, in Plato's view. Perception, as Plato famously characterizes it in the *Theaetetus*, is not like an army assembled in a "Trojan horse," each nugget of sense data separate and uncoordinated with the rest of the individual mind.

Perception is a unity for Socrates: the conscious, immaterial aspect of mental activity is present in the ordinary use of names and not merely in the scientific pursuit of definitions. Indeed, none of the ordinary concepts that Socrates discusses can be regarded as mere sensory data, such as the feeling of heat when we place our hand close to a fire. "Large," "equal," "beautiful," "courage": all of these perceptions involve the immaterial form, and for

Socrates, these are patterns that all human beings are able to comprehend by perceiving images.

To return to one of our earlier examples, when Laches is asked about courage, that is, "what is courage?" he replies (himself having served in the army) that the man of courage is one "who does not run away, but remains at his post and fights against the enemy" (190e). Socrates fully appreciates how courage is evident in the phenomena that Laches observes. Laches is remembering instances of courage that he has seen. What Socrates wants to help Laches to see is not that what he takes to be courage in the soldiers who stand their ground is nullified. What he wants is for Laches to see that the form of courage cannot be *defined* as standing one's ground; although courage has no doubt been manifested by the soldiers to whom Laches refers in the way he has conceived it, yet it is possible for courage to be operative in soldiers who flee as a tactic of fighting, that is, as a way to encircle the enemy such as the Spartans liked to do. "And yet, Laches, you must except the Lacaedemonians of Platea, who, when they came upon the light shields of the Persians, are said not to have been willing to stand and fight, and to have fled. But when the ranks were broken, they turned upon them like cavalry and won the battle of Platea" (191c).

THE *CRATYLUS* ON NAMES

There is then a great deal at stake in our discussion of the nature of names as Plato's Socrates appraises them. The *Cratylus* is the dialogue of Plato's preeminently focused on the significance and origin of names. Plato presents, in the *Cratylus*, a theory of names along the lines set forth previously. However, the commentators seem determined to rediscover Parmenides, Protagoras, or Frege and Wittgenstein in the arguments presented in this dialogue. Plato in this work rebukes the theory of language advanced by Protagoras, and indicates the nature of the intelligence operative in the ordinary use of names. In the secondary literature, however, Plato is all too frequently depicted as if had sympathy, mysteriously, with the Protagorean point of view.

A prominent view among the commentators is that, according to Plato, names are not an imitation of the nature of the objects that they are intended to indicate. Richard Ketchum says that "the point is that what accounts for the fact that a word means such and such is just the fact that it has a particular use" (141). "Two words have the same meaning if they have the same use" (141).[27] "No passage unambiguously asserts that the object named is identical to what is signified by that name," he concludes about the *Cratylus* (147). A. Silverman argues that Plato believes that "in order for a speaker to use a name in this way he must associate a description with the name. The reason a

description is necessary is that the speaker must use a description associated with the name on all occasions of its use by any speaker" (28). "I shall argue that, for Plato, nature and convention amount to two different ways in which speakers might use a name" (29). "What distinguishes the natural from the conventional uses is the description associated with that name" (29).[28]

By "natural" language, we may understand the view put forward by Socrates in the *Cratylus*: that names are an imitation of objects and actions. The name, in this case, would have a fixed meaning. By "conventional" language, the true signification of a name would be determined by the "use" which a particular statement sought to impose upon it. Malcolm Schofield has recognized the two theories of language just set out from the *Cratylus*. In Schofield's view, Socrates in that dialogue is moving away from a naturalist view of language, and toward a conventionalist theory. "Socrates contrives convincingly to suggest that the difficulties he raises for Cratylus' extreme position necessitate outright abandonment of naturalism in favor of the conventionalist theory of names."[29] The issue concerns what the names signify or indicate: in the view of Schofield, Plato has rejected the view that names are properly seen as imitations of the objects and actions which they point out.

Plato's Socrates makes exactly the opposite argument. First, for Socrates, names are names of something. They do not exist in their own right. Alphabets and vocabularies must be created by human beings. Human beings create languages with different alphabets and different vocabularies, but according to Socrates, the *patterns* that each natural language names are identical. They are universal. They are the intelligible forms and patterns that all natural languages indicate in speech.

The *Cratylus* provides an elaborate analysis of a distinction between "primary" names and "secondary" names. Primary names, as Socrates elaborates, are the letters of the alphabet themselves. These letters, Socrates insists, are nothing but direct imitations of natural sounds. "All the names that we have been explaining were intended to indicate the nature of things," Socrates states, "and that this is true of the primary quite as much as of the secondary names is implied in their being names" (422d). Socrates uses a metaphor to explain his meaning. He asks us to imagine how people who are deaf, and have no language, would communicate with one another. Would they not, Socrates reasons, use their hands and bodies and faces to imitate certain objects and aspects of the common world, in order to be able to communicate with one another? The origin of letters is just like this, Socrates reasons. And the "primary names," in his view, are fundamentally bound up with the attempt to imitate the sounds and sights about us (424b–425a).

"Secondary names," in Socrates' analysis, are composed of the primary names. This is to say, that names are made out of combinations of letters, out of combinations of small imitations, into larger names that can indicate objects and actions in the world. It needs to be stressed again that the fact that

each society originates its own alphabet or variation on an alphabet, and composes different primary and secondary names, is not in any way incompatible with the argument that Socrates is setting forth. For Socrates, it is patterns in objects, in nature, which we grasp immaterially and recognize, that all languages are busied about indicating. This species of "convention," that is, each society making up the primary and secondary names to indicate the patterns, is in fact Socrates' own account of *natural* language. The intentions of a particular speaker, if this is what is meant by "use," have no bearing upon the signification of names in Socrates' theory.

We need to keep a close eye on the relationship between name on the one hand, and the object or action named on the other. For names themselves, being produced out of vocabularies that human beings have constructed, obviously have parts (letters and syllables). But the objects and actions named are copies of the eternal forms: the copies, as the eternal forms themselves, are indivisible and partless. These are the patterns. This discussion in fact brings up a very large subject area in Plato studies, namely that involving wholes of parts and their relationships to one another and knowledge. For the moment, we wish only to state that for Plato, wholes of parts concern body, but not forms. Bodies have parts; neither the forms nor the copies of the forms instantiated in the perishable world do.

Julia Annas, in her examination of the primary and secondary aspects of a name in Plato's *Cratylus*, gets this confused. Annas believes that because a name can be broken down into primary elements, that the object of knowledge itself must be divisible into parts. Names, according to Annas, in Plato's theory, must be reduced to smaller elements. That is, the "secondary" names must be reduced to "primary" names, or the names to letters and syllables, and at that point, the letters and syllables themselves must be defined. Annas's point is that the secondary names themselves cannot be the original evidence of what names mean. "The *Cratylus* passages then, show us what happens when, in the search for knowledge of language, the conviction that knowledge requires logos is joined by the conviction that the logos in question will proceed by analyzing the compounds into elements. Pressing these two requirements brings home the fact that logos is needed all the way down; we haven't given an account of language and its functioning if our account of the elements of language is essentially arbitrary. Nothing is explained, and so known, if anything is left unexplained, and so unknowable" (111). "In the *Cratylus*, in trying to gain knowledge of a particular phenomenon—language—by offering a logos of it that analyzes it into its simple elements, he faced and accepted the conclusion that unless the claim to knowledge was to be withdrawn, the logos requirement must apply to the elements as much as to the compounds" (111).[30]

Once again, per this argument, the names used in ordinary speech would not themselves constitute the foundation, or first step, in ways of knowing.

For Plato, names are combinations of consonants and vowels, wholes of parts; that which the names indicate, however, are indivisible unities. The names which human beings construct to indicate the patterns and forms have parts; the patterns and forms named do not have parts, neither in ordinary perception nor in the scientific philosophy of definition.

Socrates, in the *Phaedo* (101c), makes a famous argument about how he will *not* accept the claim that "two," or "duality," is *caused* by the addition of one unit to another unit. In this case, two individual units are themselves intelligible instances of unity. But even in the case of "two," Socrates will not allow us to say that it has any cause more elementary than that it is *participating* in duality. Socrates rejects the argument that "two" is "caused" by one added to one, or by one moved into closer proximity to one, or by dividing one into two. The reason is that "two" is itself intelligible, a distinct form, and distinct forms for Socrates are the irreducible things; when we perceive "two" in the world, it is not the same as perceiving one plus one. If we observe two individual units as two separate units, that would not be apprehending them in their quality of duality. The point is that for Socrates, the secondary name is the lowest level of the knowable, and for this reason, the ordinary use of names actually is the original evidence for the reality of the external world and what it is.

According to Charles Kahn, this is not the theory of language set forth by Socrates in the *Cratylus*. In Kahn's theory, Plato denies that the perishable objects can be known at all. According to Kahn, Plato regards all perishable objects as being in a condition of flux. Ordinary language, in this account, would therefore not be imitating any reality at all. Kahn argues that Plato employs an "Eleatic" theory of names and language. This argument invokes the thesis that Parmenides has shaped Plato's views of the perishable world and that Socrates accordingly has no need of perceptual knowledge en route to true knowledge. "In this tradition, to regard names as the work of . . . is a short hand way of saying that this standard human view is false, i.e. that name giving expresses a collective error, a false theory held (more or less consciously) by practically all Greeks, or all men. I shall call this the Eleatic theory of names" (157).[31] Of Plato, Kahn writes: "Whether he held the view himself I do not know, and the question hardly matters (he makes Socrates assent to it, e.g., at 439c2–6). For his chief conclusion is that, even on the most favorable assumption, the study of words has nothing whatever to contribute to our knowledge of the nature of things. And this conclusion is essentially dependent upon (although it may be historically derived from) the Eleatic view that names represent a false theory" (157). "Plato does not deny that names are descriptions. (He does not assert this either, on my reading. He simply makes use of this as an assumption of the theory he is refuting)." "In discussing the meaning of primitive roots Plato develops a very interesting theory of language, one which bears a rather strong resemblance to Witt-

genstein's view in the *Tractatus* (just as the picture notion of names bears a more superficial resemblance to Wittgenstein). For in this theory Plato suggests that the elements or primitive constituents of language might stand in a one to one relation to the primitive constituents of the world, to the elements of reality (422a, 424c–425a). . . . The chief implications are these. One could not properly construct such a language unless one knew in detail both the elements of words and also the elements of things (424d1–4). Hence such a language might be used to express but could not possibly be used to discover the truth about the world" (167).

It is significant that Socrates, at the outset of the *Cratylus*, brings up the infamous Protagoras (386a–e). Protagoras, the most influential sophist, likes to make the argument that "man is the measure of all things." By this, Protagoras insists that there are no common objects known to us through our perceptions; that each of us has a solipsistic perception, which in turn indicates that any of us may use names in whichever way he or she pleases without being taken to task or cross-examined by others. Socrates brings us Protagoras at the very outset of the discussion in order to identify and reject the proposition that "every man is the measure" of what objects exist and do not exist. "But would you say, Hermogenes, that the things differ as the names differ? And are they relative to individuals, as Protagoras tells us? For he says that man is the measure of all things, and that things are to me as they appear to me, and that they are to you as they appear to you. Do you agree with him, or would you say that things have a permanent essence of their own?" (386a–b).

Socrates gains Hermogenes' assent that Protagoras's view is wrong. "But if neither is right, and things are not relative to individuals, and all things do not equally belong to all at the same moment and always, they must be supposed to have their own proper and permanent essence; they are not in relation to us, or influenced by us, fluctuating according to our fancy, but they are independent, and maintain their own essence in the relations prescribed by nature" (386d). "Are not actions also a class of beings?" "Then the actions also are done according to their proper nature, and not according to our opinion of them?" (386e–387a). As Socrates pursues his inquiry into the nature of language and names, he unfolds the view that names are instruments, used by us to indicate things to one another about the common world. "And that which has to be named, has to be named with something? . . . And with which we name? A name. Very good. Then a name is an instrument? . . . And now suppose that I ask a similar question about names. Will you answer me? Regarding the name as an instrument, what do we do when we name? . . . Do we not give information to one another, and distinguish things according to their natures? Then a name is an instrument of teaching and distinguishing natures" (388a–c).

THE SOCRATIC ELENCHUS

When scholars refer to the elenchus of Plato's Socrates, they are indicating a kind of questioning and discussion which has the air of a cross-examination. The elenchus calls the speaker's attention to some contradictory aspect of what he has answered to a previous question. Parmenides' goddess is recognized as the rhetorical champion of this doctrine. When Parmenides' goddess employs an elenchus, it is to reveal the impossible nature of the opinions which the ordinary mortals harbor:

> There is only one other description of the way remaining, namely that what is Is. To this way there are very many signposts: that Being has no coming into being and no destruction, for it is whole of limb, without motion, and without end. And it never Was, nor Will Be, because it is now, a whole all together, One, continuous; for what creation of it will you look for? How, whence could it have sprung? Nor shall I allow you to speak or think of it as springing from Not-being; for it is neither expressible nor thinkable that what-is-not is. Also, what necessity impelled it, if it did spring from nothing, to be produced earlier or later? (Freeman, frag. 8, p. 43)

There are quite a number of scholars in Plato studies who believe that Socrates' practice of cross-examination and refutation takes on a morally educative, or even a combative disposition. However, I think this is a mistaken inference. There are moments in Socratic discourse, in the discourse of Plato's Socrates, when contradictions are focused upon, antecedent to expelling them. Yet this part of a Socratic discussion is not first of all a moral examination of the interlocutor. There are only two moments when Socrates advances a confrontational discourse, and neither of these moments is expressly concerned with the moral personality of the other speaker. These two moments are the profession of ignorance, as a means to summoning forth common evidence about common objects, and in the attempt to formulate a definition for a form that has been isolated from perishable objects by the hypothetical instrument outlined in the *Phaedo* and in *Republic* book 6.

The profession of ignorance is confrontational only in an indirect way. It attempts to slow the conversation down, in order to establish the common evidence. Under the terms of the profession of ignorance, as noted, the examples produced by speakers are not interrogated or questioned at all. It is the second moment, in the attempt to replace the image-knowledge of a form with a reasoned logos where cross-examination has its true role in Socratic discourse. But the overriding premise here is that since the single form has been stipulated as an isolated, indivisible object, it can contain no contradictions, and it is toward the removal of these imperfections from a working definition that the "elenchus" of Plato's Socrates occurs.

On the other hand, when Plato's Socrates is debating with legendary sophists of an eristic disposition, such as a Euthydemus, a Dionysodorus, a Thrasymachus, a Protagoras, or a Callicles, the profession of ignorance will invariably elicit tension and conflict. This tension can be explained by the simple fact that the sophists do not wish to submit themselves to any regimen of common objects and evidence to guide the discourse. No such animosity can be seen to emerge in dialogues more properly described as conversations among friends, or among interlocutors who are not professional word-benders. In the *Laches*, the *Euthyphro*, the *Meno*, the profession of ignorance simply functions as a grounding for the inquiry. It summons forth facts, which consist, not in philosophical theories of any stripe whatsoever, but in "recollection" as to why one has assigned the name in question, and recognized the form in question, in various perishable objects hitherto.

The second stage of a Socratic inquiry, which involves the isolation of a particular form from the several examples in which it has been recognized, is almost abridged in the early dialogues. In his conversations with Euthyphro and Laches, Socrates leans on the profession of ignorance to call forth factual evidence of a form, and proceeds in a rather hasty manner to begin talking about the form as an isolated object for intellect and definition. Beginning with the *Phaedo*, and certainly in the sixth book of the *Republic*, Plato's Socrates makes this transition with much more caution and method. A hypothesis is added to the form in question, in order to enable the thinker to undertake the voyage between the enumerated instances of a form and the contemplation of an isolated form. The hypothesis just is the claim that the form exists separately. As we say, in the earlier dialogues, this transition is not made with great care or demarcation, but it can still be seen to exist.

In the early as well as in the later dialogues, Plato's Socrates is wholly focused upon the forms, which are the things that the natural languages indicate with their names. It is the common objects that natural languages name, it is the natural language and the knowledge implicit in our use of it that the profession of ignorance summons forth, and it is this clarity and movement toward definition of the common objects which is the Socratic project Plato unfolds for us.

Misapprehension and confusion about Socrates' profession of ignorance in the scholarship on Plato, however, has given rise to a radically different set of interpretations of the Platonic dialogues. These interpretations, which invariably characterize Socrates' profession of ignorance as either bewilderment or an attempt to replace scientific inquiries with moral challenges, portray Socrates' discussions as exercises in humiliation, moral exhortation, spiritual reformation, or as dramas which are to be understood more accurately as enactments of behaviors, rather than as conversations about external, common objects.

The influence of Leo Strauss has helped spawn several schools of scholarship that offer us a different way of examining a Platonic dialogue. In a view that Strauss did much to popularize, the meaning of a Socratic dialogue is not to be discovered through study of the actual speeches on view. The true significance of the dialogue is said to be rather a dramatic enterprise: one that involves historical information about the figures in the respective debates, dramas which involve "reading between the lines" of the actual dialogues.[32] Plato's Socrates is ill served in this method of interpretation. Indeed, the argument that the Platonic dialogues are principally "dramatic," when this drama is indicated to contravene and even overthrow the actual course of the discussions, is to reverse the function of the dialogue itself. For Socrates and Plato, the profession of ignorance and the dialogue are the methods for securing common evidence, and to suspend purely individualist modes of inquiry such as Protagoras's "every man the measure."

Some of the scholars who advance the Straussian thesis or something comparable wish for us to regard the dialogues as essentially psychological interactions between Socrates and his interlocutors. It is not that there is any pursuit of knowledge that can be gained, according to this viewpoint; it is alleged to be rather just the point of the dialogue to rebuke the ordinary presumption that we have any knowledge at all.

James Arieti argues as follows: "Most of the problems in understanding Plato arise from studying the dialogues as if they were a part of the tradition in which Plato did not participate."[33] "I would like to toss out the premise of virtually all work on Plato: that he is writing the kind of philosophical work in which the philosopher writes as clearly, as straightforwardly, and as soundly as he can. . . . Instead, I should like to assume that he is writing works of drama—works whose intention is principally to inspire—and that the inspiration in the dialogues is to an engagement in a life of the mind, and not with dead or even lively texts" (121). Gerald Press advances a kindred view. "In other words, I propose that we rethink or reconceive the dialogues as a different kind of document or text: neither treatise nor mime, but enactment."[34] "Whatever statements they (the dialogues) may make, whatever doctrines they may assert, they also create effects that are distinguishable from those statements and may even contradict them" (140). "If statements operate primarily on the mind, on the intellectual or rational level of experience, these other effects that the dialogues create operate through imagination and the emotions" (141).

The adversarial element, at least for Socrates himself, is merely apparent; based upon the argument that we have presented so far, the evidence which all Socratic questioning turns upon is the ordinary use of names. One can rightfully say that Socrates' deployment of the ordinary assignment of name to object and action is impartial and non-adversarial. He neither originates

that evidence nor owns it. This is indeed the reason why Socrates insists that he does not teach, but "instructs."

These discussions about piety and impiety, courage and cowardice, quickness and slowness, are discussions about forms. The suggestion that these patterns, for the early Plato, are effectively references to a discrete belief system of the speaker is not borne out by the dialogues themselves. T. H. Irwin claims that "Socrates' method is a systematic cross examination of an interlocutor, seeking to expose conflicts in the interlocutor's views and to reconstruct his beliefs as a result of reflection."[35] Hayden Ausland characterizes, and recommends to us as a plausible interpretation, a theory of the Socratic dialogue as an "enchantment"; "that is, it can refer to 'leading on' a listener or interlocutor by magical means of some kind."[36] "As we read Socratic dialogues at our academic leisure, and at the currently opposite extreme of what is called the history of philosophy, we are liable to forget the intensely competitive character of the political life of his times, and the ways in which it, perhaps far more than ambient theoretical controversies, will have shaped Socrates' discourses" (60).

Harold Tarrant offers a view rather in keeping with Ausland's. "In this chapter I argue (1) that it is important either to use terms that Plato would have approved of in describing Socratic interrogation processes or to recognize that we are not doing so; (2) that elenchus is for Plato a description of competitive dialectical activity between intellectual rivals, not a description of a friendly educative process; (3) That a more accurate description of Socratic interrogation is extasis; (4) that either term is primarily applied to persons rather than propositions."[37] Or, as Grote said, "To convict men by cross examination, of ignorance in respect to those matters in which each man believed himself to know well and familiarly—this was the constant employment and the mission of Socrates: not to teach, for he disclaimed the capacity of teaching—but to make men feel their own ignorance instead of believing themselves to know" (244).[38]

Richard Robinson presents perhaps the most searing characterization of the Socratic method of questioning. "The picture which we have so far obtained of the Socratic elenchus is by no means a favorable one. This elenchus involved persistent hypocrisy; it showed a negative and destructive spirit; it caused pain to its victims; it thereby made them enemies of Socrates."[39] "The art of elenchus is to find premises believed by the answerer and yet entailing the contrary of that thesis. . . . What the ordinary man believes would entail the contrary of Socrates' thesis: but Socrates does not believe what the ordinary man believes" (15).

If we could recall, even if only for a moment, the way the argument with Gorgias unfolds, it is not hard to see that all of the bombast and passionate advocacy is contained in the views articulated by Gorgias and Polus. To humiliate is no Socratic enterprise. Indeed, to the contrary: invective is the

one sure way to foreclose on discourse, that for which Socrates lived. The humiliations, when they occur, occur after the profession of ignorance has established the ordinary use of names as controlling evidence. Such considerations however do not appear to come into play when scholars such as Francois Renaud make their inquiries. "The feeling of shame at the disclosure of one's ignorance is meant as a sufficient incentive to rectify one's shameful condition. In other words, the purgative and exhortative functions of the elenchus are inseparable. This in turn confirms the possibility of a clean separation between the purely logical and the ethical functions of the elenchus." "The detachment from selfish, narrow minded emotions is only possible, inversely, through the attachment to or the striving toward the universal and permanent."[40]

The discussion of Socrates' profession of ignorance and the purposes of cross-examination (the elenchus) bring to mind another interest in current Plato scholarship: the alleged "aporia" or not knowing or despondency which, it is frequently held, mark the end of Socratic dialogues. When Socrates' nudges the discussions, at the conclusion, toward some professed ignorance, these are (in the case of the genuine Platonic dialogues) no more aporetic than the initial professions of ignorance. It is meant to underscore and to keep within our view that essential premise, that all inquiry depends upon preexistent knowledge and that this is not itself the creation of any philosophical conjuring. Socrates never accepts the claim, sometimes made by his interlocutors, that the "what is" questions reflect solely the opinions of Socrates, in a Protagorean mode; similarly, Socrates will never accept from his interlocutors, the claim that they are making arguments which might not reflect what they really and truly believe about the world. It is not, as Vlastos argues, Socrates' concern to penetrate into the moral interior of the interlocutor that is the reason for his insisting on candor and frankness in his interlocutor's replies; it is because the arrival at the original evidence for all inquiry, the ordinary assignment of name to object and action, cannot be effected until the common world is the shared reference point, and guides our dispositions toward it.

ARISTOTLE ON PLATO'S FORMS AND THE ISSUE OF EQUALITY

Aristotle clearly has some role to play in our discussion of the two schools of philosophy on display in this work. On the most superficial level, it is no secret that Aristotle regards the Eleatic philosophy to be in decisive respects disreputable. The Eleatics, Aristotle maintains, advance absurd premises, and draw still more ridiculous conclusions from said premises. On the other hand, it would be wrong to suggest that Aristotle is a whole-hearted support-

er of Plato's theory of the forms. To the contrary: Aristotle regards the theory of the forms as an immature philosophy—as an advance in Greek philosophy that still needs to be superseded.

It is not entirely easy for us to appreciate the intellectual context within which Aristotle appraises Plato's doctrine of forms. For Plato's Socrates at least in part arrived at the theory of the forms through an effort to withstand and repel the Sophist invasions of public speech. This is precisely the area, it seems, where Aristotle's own philosophy is the weakest. Aristotle, after all, did not need to fend off Parmenides and Protagoras. For Plato's philosophy had succeeded in doing so. It may even be observed that Aristotle does not display great familiarity with the dialogues the *Parmenides* and the *Theaetetus*, masterworks of Plato's in which the doctrines of Parmenides and Protagoras are respectively evaluated once and for all.

Aristotle, in his writing, when confronted with the prospect of an interlocutor who denies that our perceptual faculties reach actual external objects, is known to offer an observation such as that the fellow in question is a kind of "vegetable." Whether or not this claim is true is not really the point however. Such a response is surely inadequate to remove the deeper philosophical doctrines that lay behind such representations of human perceptual competence.

The objections that Aristotle holds as regards Plato's theory of the forms accordingly ignores the dialogical situation within which that doctrine was formulated by Socrates. Perhaps, as well, Plato's Socrates is sometimes too artful and subtle in articulating his doctrine. In any event, Aristotle is a thinker who demands some practical explanation for the theory of the forms. What, for example, does a form contribute to a perishable object which is said to participate in that form? Aristotle is suspicious of the isolated form. "Therefore the forms will be substance; and the same terms indicate substance in this and the ideal world (or what will be the meaning of saying that there is something apart from the particulars—the one over many?). . . . Above all one might discuss the question what on earth the forms contribute to sensible things, either to those that are eternal or to those that come into being and cease to be. For they cause neither movement nor any change in them" (*Metaphysics* 990b33–991a14). It appears that Aristotle, like the sight-lovers of Plato's *Republic*, finds very little sense in Plato's argument that the forms exist by themselves.

Plato's doctrine of forms has been presented in sufficient depth in this chapter. The evidence for the existence of forms, as indicated, is one that the reader can undertake to verify for herself at any time. The only difficulty that besets the Platonic theory of forms, and the one that Aristotle brings before us, involves the reality of the isolated form. More specifically, Aristotle's objections to Plato's doctrine of the self-subsisting forms, neglects to mention the hypothesis which Plato insists is the origin of our knowledge of such

an entity. Plato nowhere simply strides into a conversation about the forms, but summons the evidence for the existence of forms through question-and-answer as to the ordinary employment of a name.

If the name of courage is conceded to refer to one thing; and if the name of courage is one we, all of us, assign repeatedly to a wide variety of actions and characters, we are led almost irresistibly to the inference that there is such a thing as the separate form of courage, one which the perishable actions and characters so designated "participate" in. Aristotle, however, insists that the forms must demonstrate some capacity for instilling *change* in perishable objects. Aristotle's own doctrine of causation, the four-fold one, contemplates forms as "formulas": in other words, Aristotle's doctrine of cause is a doctrine of movement, that is, of intelligent movement.

There is no space here to begin to go into depth as to the role that the formula plays in Aristotle's doctrine of causation. What may be profitably pointed out here, is that the theory of causation elaborated by Plato's Socrates is not something that Aristotle has quite grasped. Perhaps he was too anxious to move on to further problems and challenges in the development of philosophy. Aristotle's genius can hardly be disputed. And yet Aristotle, failing to reach the essence of the Platonic doctrine of cause, does not therefore succeed in refuting it.

The profession of ignorance wielded by Plato's Socrates is a requisite preliminary step for the investigation into that doctrine of causation. As we have taken pains to illustrate, the profession of ignorance is a rhetorical move within a speaking situation. To put a finer point on it, the profession of ignorance seeks to establish a political equality pursuant to the establishment of common facts about common objects. In the view we have presented in this work, Parmenides especially seeks to pull the speaking situation in the opposite direction. In Parmenides' speaking situation, common objects of discourse are suppressed. It seems fair to argue that in this context, Aristotle would side quite firmly with Plato's Socrates and the profession of ignorance, and to consider this claim in more detail, we must appeal to Aristotle's doctrine of equality itself.

Language, as other philosophers have observed, is very much like a public highway. Just as a community provides for common roads so that individuals can transact their exhanges in public places, so common language is the vehicle that underwrites these forms of association. The individual who lacks the access to such a public road must obtain that access at whatever cost. If philosophy, for example, should succeed in instituting toll booths for such passage, the unphilosophic individual would be driven by necessity to pay that toll, for the traveling must occur. In the view that we have attempted to present of Parmenides' philosophy, the Eleatic doctrine attempts to encumber the public use of speech in this manner. Parmenides' doctrine of philosophy and knowledge originates a towering political distinction between the

initiated knowers and the newly disenfranchised ordinary speakers. Except that the Eleatic argument itself be disproved, public speech will have to endure upon the premise that the perishable objects have an inferior reality to the true objects known by philosophy. It is not hard to imagine a whole people becoming significantly frazzled and fatigued, if they are made to concede propositions which fly in the face of everything that is commonly said and thought. The Eleatic prohibition or embargo on coming-into-being can fairly be characterized as just such a psycho-political regulation.

To whit: language is the common possession of a people. The purchase which a human being has on a language, is absolutely fundamental to one's ability to conduct one's life in the community. It is through language that we can point out common objects to one another. It is through our common possession of a language that we can enter into, and hold one another to contracts. Most fundamentally, our common and equal possession of a language is something that provides us with equal access to the indication and articulation of truth.

Aristotle, in his evaluation of the origins of a human society, begins his analysis with an account of *transactions*. In the *Nichomachean Ethics*, as in book 2 of Plato's *Republic* (369b), the origin of society is said to be human beings' equal need for one another. No individual can be self-sufficient, and this need, antecedent to all individual powers and abilities, constitutes a foundation of equality which, in Aristotle's view, indicates the direction of justice for the city or state as a whole. "We have shown that both the unjust man and the unjust act are unfair or unequal; now it is clear that there is also an intermediate between the two unequals involved in either case. And this is the equal; for in any kind of action in which there is a more and a less there is also what is equal. If, then, the unjust is unequal, the just is equal, as all men suppose it to be, even apart from argument" (N.E. 1131a6–27). "These names, both loss and gain, have come from the voluntary exchange; for to have more than one's own is called gaining, and to have less than one's original share is called losing, e.g. in buying and selling and in all other matters in which the law has left people free to make their own terms; but when they get neither more nor less but just what belongs to themselves, they say that they have their own and that they neither lose nor gain. Therefore the just is intermediate between a sort of gain and a sort of loss, viz. those which are involuntary; it consists in having an equal amount before and after the transaction" (1132b11).

In our earlier presentation of Parmenides' argument, we tried to make it clear how Parmenides' goddess enacts a transaction with the ordinary speakers in "the way of truth." In this transaction, ordinary speakers enter into the speaking situation possessed of the equal power to indicate and articulate truth of fact in speech. Ordinary speakers are drawn into Parmenides' speaking situation with their birthright, as members of society, intact, but when the

transaction has been completed, ordinary speakers have suffered a grievous, indeed an almost irreparable loss, and they leave that speaking situation crippled beings, bereft of powers and respect that they had when they sat down for the discussion.

If the substance of Parmenides' argument is presented in this political context, that is, as a kind of transaction, in the course of which ordinary speakers are falsely convicted of being unable to indicate or speak the truth in matters of common and public fact, it seems that Aristotle himself would have to concede our point about the importance of Plato's theory of forms. For in the definition of justice that Aristotle himself provides in the *Nichomachean Ethics*, justice is preeminently an exchange relationship, and the governing logic of justice, as Aristotle presents it, is that the individuals entering into the transaction neither advance nor fall in terms of the original value that they brought with them into the exchange. One individual is a carpenter, but has need of clothing. In a just exchange, the carpenter exchanges an amount of his carpentry product which is equal in value to the clothing that he receives from the weaver. In a just transaction, human beings are neither "winners" nor "losers," but rather exchange some amount of the form of the value that they currently possess, for objects that they have need of.

The point here, in this discussion of language and equality, is that the ordinary speakers and, say, the pupil trained by Parmenides, have all been born into the same inheritance of faculties and speech. When the Eleatic philosopher designs a speaking situation within which he can obtain the whip hand over the ordinary speakers in any matter of argument or public debate whatsoever, we are talking about a transaction that could be characterized, with no theatricality, as exceeding the compass of traditional conceptions of bondage in the degree of powerlessness and suffering obtained.

The presence and operation of the forms in the ordinary use of language is a foundation of equality in knowledge and speech that Plato has succeeded in revealing to us. Aristotle, whose own intellectual freedom owed so much to the cultural atmosphere that Plato's arguments helped to generate, does not contemplate the forms from this vantage point of equality. It seems reasonable to suspect, though, that if the argument had been presented to him in that light, Aristotle would have embraced it for the reasons adduced here.

NOTES

1. My quotes from Parmenides' poem are from Kathleen Freeman's translation, in *Ancilla to the Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), frag. 6, p. 43.

2. Charles Kahn, "Being in Parmenides and Plato," *La Parola del Passato* 43 (1988): 237.

3. Charles Kahn, "Parmenides and Plato," in *Pre-Socratic Philosophy: Essays in Honor of Alexander Mourelatos*, ed. Victor Caston and Daniel W. Graham (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002), 83.

4. J. Hintikka, "Knowledge and Its Objects in Plato," In *Patterns in Plato's Thought*, ed. J. M. E. Moravcsik (Boston: D. Reidel, 1973), 17.

5. Alexander Nehamas, *Virtues of Authenticity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), xxxii.

6. Gregory Vlastos, "A Metaphysical Paradox," in *Platonic Studies*, ed. Gregory Vlastos (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 49–50.

7. Anaxagoras, frag. 12. Freeman, *Pre-Socratic Philosophers*.

8. David Sedley, *The Midwife of Platonism: Text and Subtext in Plato's Theaetetus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 35.

9. Gregory Vlastos, "Socrates," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 74 (1988): 93.

10. W. K. C. Guthrie, *Socrates* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 104.

11. Cf. chapter 6, which discusses the *Theaetetus*.

12. Ian Mueller, "Platonism and the Study of Nature," in *Method in Ancient Philosophy*, ed. Jyl Gentzler (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 82.

13. C. C. W. Taylor, "Forms as Causes in the *Phaedo*," *Mind*, n.s., 78 (1969): 52.

14. Jaap Mansfield, "Protagoras on Epistemological Obstacles and Persons," in *The Sophists and Their Legacy*, ed. G. B. Kerferd (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1981), 46.

15. H. D. Rankin, "Ouk Estin Antilegein," in Kerferd, *Sophists and Their Legacy*, 31.

16. W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Sophists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 47.

17. Freeman, *Pre-Socratic Philosophers*, frag. 3, p. 128.

18. W. J. Verdenius, "Gorgias' Doctrine of Deception," in Kerferd, *Sophists and Their Legacy*, 116. Cf. A. P. D. Mourelatos, "Gorgias on the Function of Language," *Philosophical Topics* 15 (1987): 135, 143, 157, 162.

19. Gregory Vlastos, *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 32.

20. Terry Penner, "Socrates and the Early Dialogues," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato*, ed. Richard Kraut (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

21. Cornford famously criticizes Socrates' claim in the *Theaetetus* that Protagoras communicates certain subtle doctrines to his students in the privacy of instruction. Francis Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge* (New York: Library of Liberal Arts, 1957), 36.

22. J. T. Bedu-Addo, "Sense-Experience and the Argument for Recollection in Plato's *Phaedo*," *Phronesis* 36 (1991): 27.

23. T. Ebert, "Plato's Theory of Recollection Reconsidered: An Interpretation of *Meno* 80a-86c," *Man and World* 6 (1973): 164.

24. R. E. Allen, "Anamnesis in Plato's *Meno* and *Phaedo*," *Review of Metaphysics* 13 (1959): 170.

25. J. M. Cooper, "Plato on Sense-Perception and Knowledge: *Theaetetus* 184–186," *Phronesis* 15 (1970): 144.

26. Dominic Scott, "Platonic Anamnesis Revisited," *Classical Quarterly* 37 (1987): 348.

27. Richard Ketchum, "Names, Forms and Conventionalism: *Cratylus* 383–395," *Phronesis* 24 (1979): 141.

28. A. Silverman, "Plato's *Cratylus*: The Nature of Naming and the Naming of Nature," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 10 (1992): 28–29.

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Chapter Five

The *Parmenides*: Plato's Proof of Coming to Be

The bringing together of Parmenides and Socrates in a single dialogue by the hand of a writer as gifted as Plato is destined to be an occasion of brilliance. The hold of Parmenides over the Greek intellectual culture of that time can be summed up in the Eleatic repudiation of the reality of change in nature, a thesis which alternately frustrated and arrested the progress of Greek philosophy. "How could Being perish? How could it come into being? If it came into being, it Is Not; and so too if it is about-to-be at some future time. Thus Coming-into-Being is quenched, and Destruction also into the unseen" (Freeman, frag. 8, pp. 43–44). It is to the examination of this fundamental proposition that the *Parmenides* is dedicated. In the *Parmenides*, Plato's Socrates takes the measure of Parmenides' thesis that coming-into-being is a delusion, a deceptive appearance, unreal.

If we survey for a moment the objects of investigation entertained by Parmenides, we can enumerate two: the ordinary opinions, and the "Being" of Eleatic truth. Plato's Socrates, for his part, also has two distinct objects of investigation: the ordinary opinions, and the forms. It is in the domain of the ordinary opinions where the Eleatic and Platonic philosophical principles must be measured, the one against the other. For the Eleatic, the ordinary opinions are products of mental defect, distractions to be shunted to the corner of serious intellectual enterprises; for Plato's Socrates, however, the ordinary opinions are the original cradle of human intelligence, an intelligence codified in natural languages and demonstrated ad infinitum by the humblest minds among us.

Parmenides' goddess proclaims the emptiness and meaninglessness of the ordinary opinions as soon as she welcomes a pupil into her domain. She does not concede any authority whatsoever to the ordinary opinions, and ultimate-

ly in the eighth fragment, her denunciation of these views is as uncompromising as it is severe. "For nothing else either is or shall be except Being, since Fate has tied it down to be a whole and motionless; therefore all things that mortals have established, believing in their truth, are just a name: Becoming and Perishing, Being and Not-Being, and Change of position, and alteration of bright color" (Freeman, frag. 8, p. 44).

Plato is never distracted by the goddess's declamations from a central truth of Eleatic philosophy: that public opinion is absolutely vital to its enterprise, that without the public's active *subordination to* Eleatic philosophy, the Eleatic philosophy comes to little more than mutterings in a dark corner by eccentric if colorful men. Eleatic philosophy is a philosophy of conquest. It is the right of the Eleatic doctrine to hold this position of dominion, based on the merit of its thesis, that Plato's *Parmenides* is designed to explore.

Plato's Socrates has an entirely different interest in the ordinary assignment of name to object. For Socrates, this operation of the ordinary opinions discloses an essential intelligence in human beings. Plato's Socrates, unlike Parmenides, regards the ordinary opinions as the bar for philosophers of any and all stripes. Those philosophers who cannot demonstrate that they accept the authority of the ordinary assignment of name to object as common and mutually binding evidence are thereby revealed to the assembled audience as sorcerers or charlatans whose arguments have no proper bearing on the ordinary ascertainment of fact and truth. As noted previously, the Eleatic philosophy is wholly dependent on at least the appearance of relevance to the formulation of ordinary opinions and truth of fact in the common life.

As for Socrates himself, there cannot be so much as a suggestion of any theory of forms, if the reality of the perishable bodies and the ordinary opinions which assign names to them are effectively called into question. Socrates' theory of forms is built upon the foundation of a mutual evidence implicit in the ordinary assignment of name to perishable object. In view of this, it is hardly likely to be the case that the*Parmenides*, this philosophical crossing of swords between Plato's Socrates and Parmenides, is going to focus on Socrates' theory of forms.

What the dialogue focuses on is what it must focus on: the status of the ordinary opinions and the objects which they name. It is here where Parmenides and Plato are at loggerheads. It is here where both theories must make their proofs before the assembled audience of judges, which indeed represents the public opinion. It is not to be expected that Parmenides would willingly join such a colloquy, and to some degree this could explain why the first part of the dialogue is taken up by Parmenides issuing a battery of charges and accusations against Socrates' theory of forms. Furthermore, Socrates is fairly consistent in his method of approach to interlocutors. In order to persuade them to join into conversation with Socrates in the first place,

Socrates pledges himself to be the student, the one in need of instruction and guidance.

SOCRATES' LANGUAGE OF MEMORY VERSUS THE GODDESS'S LANGUAGE OF COMMAND

The specter of Parmenides openly engaging in a conversation with Plato's Socrates is unlikely to say the least. Scholars have not made the relevant inferences from this fact however. One can make many observations about Parmenides' goddess, but that she should ever deign to explain her own theory, or subject it to critical analysis in a discussion with someone else, is not one of them. It is Plato who brings Parmenides, or at least Parmenides' argument, into a conversation. There is absolutely no evidence in Parmenides' poem that he ever would contemplate such a deed willingly.

As Parmenides' poem begins, "the mares that carry me kept conveying me as far as ever my spirit reached, which carries through every stage straight onwards the man of understanding" (1:1–4).[1] This understanding, unlike the Socratic profession of ignorance, utterly rejects common foundations for discussion. When the pupil arrives at the estate of the goddess, he is instructed that "no ill fate sent you forth to travel on this way, which is far removed indeed from the step of men, but right and justice" (1:20–28). The goddess does not invite the youth selected by fate toward some initial common ground for discoursing. She delivers commandments. As the youth accepts the commandments into his heart, so does he take into his discourse the refusal to tolerate any common beginnings with other human beings in speech. "Come now, I will tell you (and do you preserve my story, when you have heard it) about those ways of enquiry which are alone conceivable" (3:1–2).

The goddess makes no attempt to secure assent to her proclamations, nor does she allow for any such moment to emerge: "it is necessary to assert" (5:1); "these things I command you to heed"; and "from this way of enquiry I keep you first of all, but secondly from that on which mortals with no understanding stray two headed" (5:2–3). The domain of the common objects, and therewith the domain of the common names, is swept entirely out of any discourse that the goddess will tolerate: "And let not habit do violence to you on the empirical way of exercising an unseeing eye and a noisy ear and tongue, but decide by discourse the controversial test enjoined by me" (7:2–4).

The goddess is adamant that she will not allow her pupil to so much as engage in discourse which trades on any evidence from memory, which would certainly include Socrates' account of the "receptacle" in the soul. It

has always been the practice of Plato's Socrates to insist on his knowing nothing, on being personally "barren," but this has always meant the same thing: that the original source of knowledge is a common object, that it is demonstrable in the ordinary assignment of name to perishable objects and actions, and that this knowledge is the only legitimate or even possible foundation for discourse. It is a grounds for discourse that the goddess is wholly mobilized against. "How and whence grown? I shall not let you say or conceive, 'from not being,' for it cannot be said or conceived that anything is not . . . thus it must either be entirely or not at all. Nor will the strength of conviction ever impel anything to be alongside it from not being" (8:7–18).

When the time finally does come and the goddess has begun to address how the youth may speak to the others in the city, she formally advises her pupil that the time for the articulation of truth must be suspended. "Therewith I put a stop for you to my reliable discourse and thought about reality; from this point on learn human beliefs, hearing the deceptive composition of my verse" (8:50–52). At this point, we are solely concerned with the terms of discourse, and when the goddess does give the youth instruction on how to speak to others, it is based upon the premise that all of the knowledge impressed upon their memories about the common objects and names employed is utterly bereft of value and shall not be accepted into evidence.

Memory is a pivotal issue for Plato. As the *Theaetetus* tells us, at infancy, the soul of a human being is like an "empty receptacle." It is not yet stocked with pieces of knowledge, of impressions made in the wax block of the soul by the images of perceptible objects, or of thoughts that one has had (197e). Memory is equally the foundation of the first part of Plato's *Parmenides*, which establishes the parameters of the discussion that Parmenides will be participating in.

Cephalus, from Anaxagoras's home of Clazomenae, has come to Athens to hear about a famous discussion alleged to have taken place between Socrates and Parmenides. He seeks this information from Antiphon, who himself learned about the contents of the conversation by an account from a firsthand observer, Pythodoros. "Before he was grown up," Plato tells us, "Antiphon worked hard at getting that conversation by heart though nowadays he takes after his grandfather of the same name and devotes most of his time to horses" (126cd). Antiphon, Cephalus says, "recognized me from his memory of my earlier visit."

Memory is the foundation from which the conversation between Parmenides and Socrates is conducted. It has been noted in the fourth chapter that the profession of ignorance consists in the asking of the "what is?" question, and that this question is designed to arrest all private vocabularies, especially philosophical ones. The conversation must be initiated and grounded upon reference to the ordinary assignment of common name to object. These are the terms of Plato's Socratic discourse, hard learned and hard won. These

terms of discourse are anathema to Eleatic method, yet the Parmenides in this dialogue is submitted to them.

The goddess has forbidden her pupil to engage in any kind of discourse which would involve such a beginning as the profession of ignorance entails, that is, a common beginning. Accordingly, the Parmenides who is represented to us in the first part of Plato's dialogue is a curious hybrid. To some degree he espouses his familiar Eleatic postulates, but to an important degree, he is made to utter pronouncements that are in line with Socrates' profession of ignorance and unmistakable doctrine of cause.

The profession of ignorance, as we have taken pains to demonstrate, quite clearly is not a *possession* of Socrates. The evidence which it summons before assembled speakers is a mutual knowledge, as Socrates maintains right through his trial. If Parmenides can be expected to resist and renounce the terms of the profession of ignorance, this might well explain Plato's offering of a forum to Parmenides for the utterance of accusations and attacks on Socrates' theory of forms. The Eleatic challenges to Socrates' doctrine do not land any significant blows, scholarly opinion notwithstanding, but they do afford Parmenides a measure of dignity, as he is compelled to surrender a great deal of his philosophical pretensions under the terms of the discussion which are gradually unfolded.

We should quickly point out a couple of these quite Socratic statements that Plato puts into the mouth of Parmenides. Toward the end of his criticisms of Socrates' theory of forms, Parmenides makes a statement very like, nay almost identical to the one Socrates makes in the*Republic*, when he is observing how difficult it is to introduce the discussion of any separated form among most discussants:

> And yet Socrates, Parmenides went on, these difficulties and many more besides are inevitably involved in the forms, if these characters of things really exist and one is going to distinguish each form as a thing just by itself. The result is that the hearer is perplexed and inclined either to question their existence, or to contend that, if they do exist, they must certainly be unknowable by our human nature. Moreover, there seems to be some weight in these objections, and, as we were saying, it is extraordinarily difficult to convert the objector. Only a man of exceptional gifts will be able to see that a form, or essence just by itself, does exist in each case. (135ab)

In practically the next statement, Plato has Parmenides all but articulate the Socratic theory of cause, the intelligible forms by which we identify the perishable objects and their characters: "But on the other hand, Parmenides continued, if, in view of all these difficulties and others like them, a man refuses to admit that forms of things exist or to distinguish a definite form in every case, he will have nothing on which to fix his thought, so long as he will not allow that each thing has a character which is always the same, and

in so doing he will completely destroy the significance of all discourse. But of that consequence I think you are only too well aware" (135bc).

Kenneth Sayre correctly notes that "incongruity" emerges when "Parmenides proclaims at 135bc that the very power of discourse depends upon the existence of forms."[2] We hasten to point out here, however, that there is nothing "devious" or improper about Plato's design of this exchange. For the profession of ignorance has the power to compel testimony from those who profess philosophical views which part company "with everything that is commonly said." Even if Parmenides himself would be unlikely to participate in such a discussion, it is hardly correct to observe that Socrates could not therefore simply subject the Eleatic thesis to the profession of ignorance on his own. The treatment of Protagoras in the *Theaetetus* is a case in point.

Commentators frequently refer to the respect and ceremony with which Socrates refers to Parmenides in Plato's dialogues. It is possible to overstate this. Plato's Socrates professes ignorance before the humblest interlocutor, but when the discussant is one of the towering pedagogues known to Athenians, expressions of deference are all the more to be expected. In any event, when Plato presents Socrates talking directly with Parmenides, he has Socrates identify himself as an "outsider," as one who has not been privileged with the esoteric doctrines of the Eleatics. This is exactly how the profession of ignorance should lead Socrates to characterize himself: for the profession of ignorance leads us to common knowledge, not private doctrines.

In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates states that "a feeling of respect keeps me from treating in an unworthy spirit Melissus and the others who say the universe is one and at rest, but there is one being whom I respect above all, Parmenides himself, in my eyes as Homer says, 'a reverend and awful' figure. I met him when I was quite young and he quite elderly, and I thought there was a sort of depth to him that was altogether noble" (183e–184a). Let us not leave out any part of the full picture though. In the passage from the *Theaetetus*, it continues: "But I had almost forgotten, Theodorous, another school which teaches just the opposite—that reality is 'one, immovable, being is the name of all,' and much else that men like Melissus and Parmenides maintain in opposition to all those people, telling us that all things are a unity which stays within itself, having no room to move in. How are we to deal with all these combatants?" (181a).

In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates already has his hands full dealing with the arguments from the "flux" schools of philosophy, which maintain that everything is always in motion (Heraclitus), or at least that all objects belong to a private domain of perception for each individual (Protagoras). Socrates here only mentions Parmenides as relevant to his major concern, securing a way through to the common objects of discourse. Parmenides, however reverend, is not hospitable to this ground. "For little by little our advance has brought us, without our knowing it, between the two lines, and unless we can some-

how fend them off and slip through, we shall suffer for it, as in that game they play in the wrestling schools, where the players are caught by both sides and dragged both ways at once across the line" (181a). "I am afraid that we might not understand his words and still less follow the thought they express."[3]

It is not just respect that keeps Socrates from any inhospitable airs when Parmenides is the interlocutor. The way to discourse cannot be led past its obstacles by recriminations. In fact, pugilistic argument is *the* obstacle to discourse. Socrates moves to disarm it at most every turn, en route to a common beginning. The point is that vexing arguments must be *met*. In order to meet such arguments, we must make them intelligible on common grounds. It is in this respect that Socrates ranks himself with "ordinary people," and he gives instruction to Theaetetus on just how one can approach a philosopher such as Parmenides.

SOCRATES REBUTS THE ELEATIC INDICTMENT OF ORDINARY OPINIONS

Socrates makes it a point to illustrate how Zeno, in his literary defense of Parmenides, is effectively advancing an identical hypothesis to his mentor. Thus, in a preliminary skirmish with Zeno, Socrates is clearly grappling with Parmenides' master doctrine as regards ordinary speakers (128ac). "But next I debar you from that way along which wander mortals knowing nothing, two-headed, for perplexity in their bosoms steers their intelligence astray, and they are carried along deaf as they are blind, amazed, uncritical hordes, by whom To Be and Not To Be are regarded as the same and not the same, and for whom in everything there is a way of opposing stress" (Freeman, frag. 6, p. 43). The claim that Parmenides makes in his poem is one that Socrates now calls our attention to in the formulations of Zeno.

Parmenides maintains that anyone who would oppose his thesis about the one Being must helplessly fall into self-contradiction. Zeno can be seen to make a kindred argument in the early pages of the *Parmenides*. If we deny the thesis of the Eleatic unity, Zeno indicates, then we shall have to admit all sorts of contradictions as being true:

> When Zeno had finished, Socrates asked him to read once more the first hypothesis of the argument. He did so, and Socrates asked, What does this statement mean, Zeno? "If things are many," you say, "they must be both like and unlike. But that is impossible; unlike things cannot be like, nor like things unlike." That is what you say, isn't it? "Yes," replied Zeno. "And so, if unlike things cannot be like or like things unlike, it is also impossible that things should be a plurality; if many things did exist, they would have impossible attributes. Is this the precise purpose of your

> arguments—to maintain, against everything that is commonly said, that things are not a plurality?" (127de)

Even in this early jousting with Zeno, Plato reveals the direction that the dialogue will take. Zeno, for his part, utters the familiar Eleatic abstractions about Being. Socrates, by contrast, immediately begins to bring the conversation down to the level of the mundane, perishable objects most familiar to everyone. It is from the perishable objects that the Eleatic must somehow produce his one Being. If contradictions beset our understanding of the perishable objects, then this must be demonstrated against our opinion of the perishables, rather than in ethereal rhetoric in which the perishables are not directly indicated.

Socrates, in order to be as clear and direct as possible, selects himself as the perishable object to talk about. Using himself as an example, he promptly puts into effect the indictment of the ordinary speakers that the Eleatics utter. Socrates says: "When he wants to show that I am many things, he can say that my right side is a different thing from my left, my front from my back, my upper parts from my lower, since no doubt I do partake of plurality. When he wants to prove that I am one thing, he will say that I am one person among the seven of us, since I partake also of unity. So both statements are true. Accordingly, if anyone sets out to show about things of this kind—sticks and stones, and so on—that the same thing is many and one, we shall say that what he is proving is that something is many and one, not that unity is many or that plurality is one; he is not telling us anything wonderful, but only what we should all admit" (129cd).

Parmenides well knows that ordinary speakers are quite stubborn when it comes to the suggestion that the opposite forms mix. Ordinary speakers deny that the opposites partake of one another, and this is one of Parmenides' serious indictments against them in the eighth fragment of his poem. "They have established the custom of naming two forms, one of which ought not to be mentioned: that is where they have gone astray. They have distinguished them as opposite in form, and have marked them off from one another by giving them different signs" (Freeman, pp. 44–45).

As Socrates evaluates the Eleatic claim, he immediately introduces a distinction in his theory that Parmenides can be seen attempting to suppress, repeatedly. If we are to talk about forms by themselves, Socrates indicates, we must make a transition from the perishable individuals such as sticks and stones, you and I, hair and mud, and the rest. To speak in the language of the *Phaedo* and of the *Republic*, we must hypothesize the existence of a separate form, which can only be done in "reflection":

> But as I said just now, if he begins by distinguishing the forms apart just by themselves—likeness, for instance, and unlikeness, plurality and unity, rest and motion,

> and all the rest—and then shows that these forms among themselves can be combined with, or separated from, one another, then, Zeno, I should be filled with admiration. I am sure you have dealt with this subject very forcibly, but, as I say, my admiration would be much greater if anyone could show that these same perplexities are everywhere involved in the forms themselves—among the objects we apprehend in reflection, just as you and Parmenides have shown them to be involved in the things we see. (129e–130a)

At a later point in the dialogue, just prior to the moment when Parmenides is assigned to investigate his own theory subject to the terms of the profession of ignorance, the great Eleatic can be seen to urge upon Socrates a type of investigation wherein the distinction between separated forms and the images of the forms in perishable objects shall be ignored and suppressed. "What form, then, should this exercise take, Parmenides?" "The form that Zeno used in the treatise you have been listening to. With this exception—there was one thing you said to him which impressed me very much—you would not allow the survey to be confined to visible things or to range only over that field; it was to extend to those objects which are specially apprehended by discourse and can be regarded as forms" (135e).

Socrates declines to perform this exercise, and not just because he regards the Zenonian method to be nonsensical in itself. Socrates' discussion certainly involves both the forms and the perishable objects in which they are enmattered, but this is not to say that he ever collapses the distinction between them, or countenances such by others. There is no genuine Socratic discourse which can treat forms and perishable objects as a single subject. Needless to say, all of the criticisms that Parmenides makes against the Socratic theory of forms in this dialogue are dependent on just this conflation of unlike objects.

PARMENIDES LAUNCHES ATTACKS ON SOCRATES' THEORY OF FORMS

One is struck by the number of scholars who, upon studying the *Parmenides*, come to the conclusion that Socrates and his *Phaedo* theory of forms have received decisive, even devastating blows. Robert Turnbull refers to "Parmenides in the wake of his devastation of Socrates' response to Zeno" (39).[4] Kelsey Wood argues that "Parmenides successfully reduces to absurdity the notion that an eidos exists separately as the original of which the phenomenon is a likeness" (2).[5] Sayre analyzes this part of the dialogue in a similar vein: "To the extent that Parmenides' ensuing criticism reveals genuine deficiencies in the view of the forms working in the middle dialogues, it is an expose of shortcomings for which the author might have held himself re-

sponsible. Whatever his reasons for undertaking this criticism in the manner chosen, writing these passages must have been a sobering experience for Plato, and he may be showing something of his reaction to this experience in his portrayal of Socrates being deflated by Parmenides' arguments" (68).[6]

The isolated forms that Plato's Socrates talks about are different from the images of forms in perishable bodies. They are approached differently. One cannot approach the notion of an isolated form by itself without reflection and intellectual investigation. On the other hand, it would be radically false to suggest that there is no serious relationship between the forms as images in perishable bodies and the form as isolated object for analysis and definition. In fact, it is the images that Socrates reflects upon, as he begins to make his way toward a definition of the now isolated form. It upsets a considerable number of commentators when Plato's Socrates utters a statement such as "justice is just," or "courage is courageous." They fume that such an utterance must be meaningless if not incomprehensible. It is far from being so, however.

In the *Republic*, Socrates discusses how all people talk very easily about beautiful objects of various kinds: beautiful music, beautiful faces, bodies. However, when Socrates proposes to investigate the isolated form of beauty by itself, the sightlovers look at him as if he is quite mad. This abstraction startles people, or else it confuses them. We do enough, in this reference, to understand that the hypothesis of the isolated form embarks upon a kind of investigation that is no longer bound by perceptual faculties and memory merely.

When Socrates utters phrases such as "beauty is beautiful," or "justice is just," he is reminding both himself and us that the original evidence for the definition of the form is nevertheless those images in the perishable bodies that we have recognized and named. As the entire sophist project proves, it is quite easy to bend and mongrelize words once they have been separated from a distinct context. When Socrates utters that "beauty is beautiful," or that "justice is just," he is reasserting the fundamental linkage between our most difficult knowledge (definitions of forms) and the most easily obtained knowledge (naming the patterns in the perishable objects). The analysis must be guided by the most basic knowledge we have, even as it exchanges perceptual recognition for intellectual investigation. This is the very grounds upon which Thrasymachus's definition of justice is unseated in book I of the *Republic*.

Parmenides' criticisms of Socrates' theory of forms in this dialogue all concern the relationship between images in the perishable bodies, and the isolated forms. Since Parmenides does not present the manner in which Socrates hypothesizes the existence of the isolated forms, he is able to create the appearance of inconsistency in the use of a single name to indicate both of these kinds of objects.

"You say you hold that there exist certain forms, of which these other things come to partake and so to be called after their names; by coming to partake of likeness or largeness or beauty or justice, they become like or large or beautiful or just?' 'Certainly, said Socrates.' 'Then each thing that partakes receives as its share either the form as a whole or a part of it? Or can there be any other way of partaking besides this?' 'No, how could there be?' 'Do you hold, then, that the form as a whole, a single thing, is in each of the many, or how?' 'Why should it not be in each, Parmenides?' 'If so, a form which is one and the same will be at the same time, as a whole, in a number of things which are separate, and consequently will be separate from itself" (131ab).

In the view we will present of the first hypothesis, it is Parmenides' thesis which is being investigated. In accordance with that investigation, we will demonstrate, Parmenides' thesis is proved to fail. Under Plato's guidance, Parmenides' shall have to amend his thesis, and when he has, at the outset of the second hypothesis, it is Parmenides himself who will have to share ownership in the theory and reality of the forms. For these will be made manifest in the concessions that Parmenides' himself will be forced to make.

To continue with the analysis, Socrates gives a playful answer to Parmenides here in the first part of the dialogue:

> "No it would not," replied Socrates, "if it were like one and the same day, which is in many places at the same time and nevertheless is not separate from itself. Suppose any given form is in them all at the same time as one and the same thing in that way." "I like the way you make out that one and the same thing is in many places at once, Socrates. You might as well spread a sail over a number of people and then say that the one sail as a whole was over them all. Don't you think this is a fair analogy?" "Perhaps it is." "Then would the sail as a whole be over each man, or only a part over one, another part over another?" "Only a part." "In that case, Socrates, the forms themselves must be divisible into parts, and the things which have a share in them will have a part for their share." (cd)

Plato presents Socrates as patiently absorbing these arguments from Parmenides. It is not true, of course, that Plato's Socrates will allow that there are any parts in a form. The entire point of the hypothetical model of definition is to isolate the object of knowledge so that it *is* indivisible: to stipulate or hypothesize the existence of a separate form is to do just that, to assert its indivisibility. We will take this up in much greater detail in the last chapter on the *Theaetetus*.

Scholars may state that Socrates does not make a very effective defense of his theory of forms. The commentators however do not adequately explore whether or not this is something that Socrates really needs to do here. The purpose of the dialogue is to scrutinize Parmenides' thesis. And, when Parmenides has been made to confess that he too, like the rest of mortals,

must begin a true discourse by reference to perishable bodies, it will follow as the night the day, that he is himself obligated to this use of one name to refer to very many objects. It will be seen that the mere admission of the reality of a perishable object, will irrevocably entail the admission that a single name for one self-same character or pattern is used many, indeed infinite times, without any inconsistency or contradictory implications whatsoever.

THE THIRD MAN

Gregory Vlastos has made much of Parmenides' criticisms as regards Socrates' theory of forms. Paramount among these criticisms, as retailed in the first part of the *Parmenides*, is the relationship between the images of the forms in perishable bodies, and second, the isolated forms themselves.[7] If we take as an example the form "courage," it is possible to trace out the problem with which Parmenides here confronts Socrates.

Let us say that we have a brave soldier in our memory, and one of us present has recently experienced a family member who has had to battle great fear in facing the surgeon's knife. Let us add into our equation an example of a budding philosopher, who has cast adrift from established, but unsatisfactory arguments, in search of truer and stronger ones. Courage is an image that our gathered speakers have recognized in these several figures, and we have them all enumerated in our conversation with one another.

Socrates, Parmenides observes, will insist on talking about "courage itself," about a form that is not an image in the several perishable bodies. Here, then, we encounter the problem of the "third man." How shall we employ the name "courage," both to indicate the images in the perishable bodies, and to indicate the form which exists separately, as per Plato's hypothetical model in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*? Parmenides reasons that, in fact, since the "courage" that is recognizable in the several instances is at least partly unlike the courage in the isolated form, that we shall need a third construction of "courage" to encompass the first two sorts. In other words, if "courage" is to be used as a name that indicates both the quality in the perishable object and the form as an isolated entity, then there is need for a third grouping which can encompass them both.

The problem does not stop there, however. For now we have three versions of "courage," all slightly different, and all in need of some umbrella-like unity in order to justify the use of a single name. This problem, in fact, leads to what is called "infinite regress." In other words, the difference between courage as an image in the perishable bodies and courage as an isolated form requires, we are instructed, a third over-arching definition or class of

"courage," to bring the disparate elements together. And this process will simply keep going.

"I imagine your ground for believing in a single form in each case is this. When it seems to you that a number of things are large, there seems, I suppose, to be a certain single character which is the same when you look at them all; hence you think that largeness is a single thing." "True, he replied." "But now take largeness itself and the other things which are large. Suppose you look at these in the same way in your mind's eye, will not yet another unity make its appearance—a largeness by virtue of which they all appear large?" "So it would seem." "If so, a second form of largeness will present itself, over and above largeness itself and the other things that share in it, and again, covering all these, yet another, which will make all of them large. So each of your forms will no longer be one, but an indefinite number" (132b).

A. L. Peck has argued, correctly, that this situation could not arise if we stayed strictly within Socrates' actual argument. For the forms are "objects we apprehend in reflection" (130a). Peck writes, "It seems clear that Parmenides has grasped this point as well, since after the conclusion of his arguments with Socrates he refers to these two distinct sorts of things in almost the same terms as those which Socrates had used at 130a: he calls them 'the things seen' and 'those which are just what one might apprehend by reason and consider to be forms'" (135e).[8]

Peck continues: "There can be no doubt that for Socrates himself this distinction is the core of his theory. It is, however, completely ignored by Parmenides in the third man argument; and as we shall see, without ignoring it he would be unable to proceed with that argument" (161). "By taking the argument in isolation and excluding from consideration what Socrates has said previously and what Parmenides says later, Vlastos misses the fact that Parmenides ignores this distinction, and hence his whole interpretation is founded on a misconception" (161). "With regard to the doctrine of forms, there can be no reasonable doubt. It is expounded by Socrates early in the dialogue itself. The essence of it is that there are two levels of things: (1) the forms . . . ; and (2) particular objects apprehended by the senses. Each of the forms is one, and there are many particulars which 'partake' of each form, thereby acquiring the distinctive characteristic of the form as denoted by its name, e.g. Socrates is just by partaking of the form just. That is to say that there is a connection between the two levels. . . . It is the special mark of the doctrine of forms that both kinds of object must be taken account of; and no doctrine which fails to do this and to assert the connection between the two can be genuinely Platonic" (126).[9]

For the present moment, we can record the following facts. In response to the battery of challenges to the theory of the forms which we have, in an abridged manner, indicated here, Socrates restates his theory without either rancor or discomfort. "But Parmenides, said Socrates, may it not be that each

of these forms is a thought, which cannot properly exist anywhere but in a mind. In that way each of them can be one and the statements that have just been made would no longer be true of it" (132b). "But Parmenides, the best I can make of the matter is this—that these forms are as it were patterns fixed in the nature of things. The other things are made in their image and are likenesses, and this participation they come to have in the forms is nothing but their being made in their image" (132d).

IN SOCRATES' VIEW, DO HAIR AND MUD, UNDIGNIFIED OBJECTS, HAVE FORMS?

One of the challenges that Parmenides makes to Socrates in the first part of the *Parmenides* is whether or not the theory of forms extends to objects rather than merely to qualities of objects: to sticks and stones, or hair and mud and other "undignified" things. Plato is calling our attention to the defect of vanity which an insufficiently disciplined philosopher of the forms might fall prey to. It is easy to characterize the forms as lofty, merely imaginary or "idealistic" things, and it is not unlikely that philosophers could become seduced or befuddled in an attempt to protect their dignity from bruising criticisms. The huge tendency in modern scholarship to represent Socrates as effectively a moralist or ethicist—a radical distortion of what the profession of ignorance fundamentally *is*, provides ample evidence for Plato's indirect observation.

Commentators regularly construe Socrates' hesitant response to this Parmenidean query as evidence that the theory of forms is beset by inconsistencies and contradictions. However, they are missing the point. The common names (sticks and stones, hair and mud) quite obviously *are* forms, forms as images, every bit as much as courage and justice are. Plato's discussion of perceptual knowledge in the *Theaetetus* should dissolve any lingering doubts that any commentator may have. What is at stake at present is not the extension or lack of extension of Socrates' theory of forms: it is rather a matter of an irreconcilable conflict between two views of the ordinary opinions, and of the objects ordinarily named.

The Eleatic theory denies the reality of the perishable bodies. When Parmenides urges Socrates to undertake a study which treats the perishable bodies and forms as one single object, it is part of his attempt to make the Eleatic foundations of argument the grounds for Socrates' theory itself. If forms and perishable objects are treated as interchangeable objects, then it becomes possible to suggest that our knowledge of the perishable objects must be deduced from some knowledge of the forms, an interpretation of

Plato that Vlastos and Nehamas among others have labored long and hard to advance.

Socrates is very clear, however, about the issue he is setting before us. Socrates does not entertain the question as to whether or not the perishable objects as bodies have forms; he addresses himself to the maneuver that Parmenides is attempting to make, that is, his attempt to alter our knowledge of perishable bodies into mere deductions from some Eleatic form. What Socrates wishes to make clear to us is that it would be false to regard a perishable body *as* a form: it *shares* in forms, but it is itself but a perishable body, a whole of parts.

"And again, a form of man, apart from ourselves and all other men like us—a form of man as something by itself? Or a form of fire or of water?" "I have often been puzzled about those things, Parmenides, whether one should say that the same thing is true in their case or not." "Are you also puzzled, Socrates, about cases that might be thought absurd, such as hair or mud or dirt or any other trivial and undignified objects? Are you doubtful whether or not to assert that each of these has a separate form distinct from things like those we handle?" "Not at all, said Socrates. In these cases, the things are just the things we see; it would surely be too absurd to suppose that they have a form. All the same, I have sometimes been troubled by a doubt whether what is true in one case may not be true in all. Then, when I have reached that point, I am driven to retreat, for fear of tumbling into a bottomless pit of nonsense. Anyhow, I get back to the things which we were just now speaking of as having forms, and occupy my time with thinking about them" (130cd).

Several scholars maintain that Parmenides here reveals a lack of completeness in Socrates' theory. They revive Vlastos's contention that it is only Parmenides who possesses sophistication in the business of evaluating the things that have being, and that Socrates is at best a novice, quite conceivably out of his depth.[10] Turnbull writes: "Parmenides' next question, inquiring about a form for man, raises genuine difficulties. For here we have what, following Strawson again, would be a sortal form, that is, a form corresponding to a noun or a nominal use. Prima facie, one could distinguish between the form of man itself and an individual man. But could that individual be said to be a man by virtue of having a share of the man itself and thus having a man in him? Here, if you please, is a third man we don't need" (19). "It is very doubtful that the *Phaedo* account or Socrates' account in the *Parmenides* can accommodate sortal forms without revision, and Socrates does well to answer that he is puzzled about them (and, one adds, the general applicability of his account to sortals)" (19). "It is thus not simply the shift from moral concerns that is involved; it is as well Socrates' failure to be preoccupied with ontological or metaphysical issues that have no obvious practical import."[11]

R. E. Allen has a similar view about this passage in the *Parmenides*. "Finally, Socrates' rejection of separate ideas of hair, mud , and dirt is philosophically clumsy. Grant that these things are worthless and trivial; still, he has adopted a pattern of argument that ought to lead him to accept ideas of evil and injustice, recognized in the *Republic*. If one must countenance ideal evil, why stick at ideal trivia?" "There is much reason in Socrates' concern that what is true in one case may yet prove true in all" (109). "The argument carries through, not only for men, but for sticks and stones, and for hair, mud, and dirt—for whatever should be classed as a distinct kind of sensible" (111).[12]

It is Socrates, in the *Theaetetus*, who in his discussion of a kind of knowledge that is rooted in perception and said to be incapable of error—includes "horse" and "ox" along with "ugly" and "beautiful" as things that no person could conceivably mistake for one another. Nobody mistakes an ox for a horse, as nobody mistakes ugliness for beauty (190c). The ox and the horse, as impressions in the soul's receptacle, are what Strawson and Turnbull refer to as "sortal" forms. It is not as if Socrates has a problem with the perishable bodies themselves having forms.

Thus Socrates has cause for both of the responses that he makes to Parmenides, as regards undignified objects and the question as to whether or not they have forms. The perishable bodies *themselves* are certainly not forms. However, perishable bodies certainly do participate in forms, and this holds for "sortal" forms as well as for the more commonly discussed predicates. Hair and mud are first of all "just the things we see": our perception of them is not reflective; we perceive what is bodily, what has shape and weight and parts and place.

Above all, let us not lose track of the most important fact for Plato's theory of the forms. This theory cannot antecede or pre-empt a common agreement as to the reality of the perishable bodies in which we are first of all *introduced* to the forms as images. This is what Parmenides and the Eleatic doctrine deny to us; and hence it is no wonder, at this stage of the conversation, that it is quite impossible for Socrates to make a defense of the forms in the manner which Parmenides is requesting.

PLATO SHIFTS FOCUS TO THE ELEATIC THEORY

When Parmenides begins to urge Socrates to take up the methods of argument which Zeno has developed, Socrates declines the invitation. In a graceful manner, enlisting encouragement from the assembled audience, Parmenides is persuaded to take up his own thesis for investigation. Ostensibly, the method to be used is the one ascribed to Zeno. In fact, however, the method

which Parmenides is enlisted to apply to his own thesis is that of the profession of ignorance.

That the method employed by Parmenides as he undertakes an investigation into his own thesis is the profession of ignorance can be proved. As we have indicated in earlier chapters, there is a radical difference between the concept of being that is employed in the respective theories of Socrates and Parmenides. In Parmenides, "Being" is simply the sole real object: no matter what objects we may think that we are talking about, the Eleatic thesis will reinterpret our statements as references to an object which, by definition, does not have parts.

For Plato's Socrates, "Being" is not an object: it is a part of an object that is real and has existence. When we are talking about perishable objects, Parmenides' thesis and Socrates' thesis lead in diametrically opposite directions. For Parmenides, the enumeration of any perishable object whatsoever will be classified as simply one more moment of the partless "being," which is to say that the object commonly spoken about (wholes of parts) simply vanish into the ether; whereas for Plato's Socrates, references to the perishable objects concern those objects which *have* being. The difference is momentous: for Plato's Socrates, the discussion of the objects which have being issues in wholes of infinite parts.

In accordance with the agreement that the discussants have reached, Parmenides may begin to advance the thesis that his own "Being" exists. Nobody needs to be told, that Parmenides' conception of 'being' is one that encompasses "all things": this is the very exegesis that Socrates has provided in the first part of the dialogue. Yet, as "Parmenides" in the first hypothesis advances his thesis of all-encompassing "being," that is, being as the perfect unity of "all things"—we find that it is Socrates' *Phaedo* theory of forms which is driving the analysis. For Socrates, one name indicates one character, and that character, no matter how many times we utter it in no matter how many contexts, always refers to the same pattern. "Unity," indeed the unity of "all things," is what Parmenides claims his "Being" to amount to, but in accordance with the *Phaedo* theory of forms, unity will not admit plurality into its nature. It cannot do so. What is strictly unity cannot encompass anything more than the nature of unity; indeed, it cannot even encompass, the *Phaedo* theory of unity, the Parmenidean deity of "Being" itself.

Several prominent commentators insist that in the *Parmenides*, Socrates is being shown up by Plato as somewhat of a bumbler. These commentators say that there is little to no evidence that this dialogue is a typical Socratic dialogue. Gilbert Ryle's analysis proceeds along such lines: "so slight a part does Socrates play in the *Parmenides*, *Sophist* and *Politicus*, and so slight also is the positive role given to any known Socratic theories in those dialogues or in the *Theaetetus*, that the natural inference would surely be that Plato had discovered that certain important philosophic truths were to be

credited not to Socrates but to the eleatics. Zeno is the teacher now, not Socrates" (130).[13] Ryle's claim, that "Zeno is the teacher now," is premature to say the least. The Parmenides and Zeno in this dialogue have attempted to harness Socrates into a regimen of Eleatic mental gymnastics, but according to Plato, the author of the dialogue, Socrates has waved away the offer.

It is Parmenides' thesis that is going to be taken up in the first hypothesis, and Plato leaves us with no doubts. The interlocutors urge Parmenides to conduct the investigation:

> Parmenides replied, I cannot refuse, although I feel like the old race horse in Ibacus, who trembles at the start of the chariot race, knowing from long experience what is in store for him. The poet compares his own reluctance on finding himself, so late in life, forced into the lists of love, and my memories too make me frightened of setting out, at my age, to traverse so vast and hazardous a sea. However, I must do as you wish, for after all, as Zeno says, we are all friends here. (137ab)

> What supposition shall we start with? Would you like me, since we are committed to play out this laborious game, to begin with myself and my own original supposition? Shall I take the one itself and consider the consequences of assuming that there is, or is not, a one? (137b)

Question and answer play a role in Parmenides' theory, as we have addressed in the first chapter. However, this question and answer occurs between the goddess and her trained pupils on the one hand, and philosophically uninitiated interlocutors. The question and answer to be conducted in the first hypothesis might involve such a pairing, as Parmenides is a locomotive mind, whereas Aristoteles is a novice or worse. Yet, Plato compels the figure of Parmenides to apply the *Phaedo* theory of forms to his own theory. Aristoteles' role should not be underestimated, because he represents the ordinary opinions. And the fact of the matter is that at the conclusion of the first hypothesis, when Parmenides' thesis has been subjected to the *Phaedo* theory of forms insofar as the discussion of unity bears upon the Eleatic theory, it is the meekest and humblest among them who proclaims, with effortless confidence, that Parmenides' theory cannot possibly be correct.

What Plato has done in the first hypothesis is have Parmenides reason backwards, beginning with his thesis about the one being, and leading back to the ordinary opinions and the perishable objects with which they are bound up. There is no other material for Parmenides to consider en route to his One. What the first hypothesis reveals is that it is not possible to proceed from the perishable objects and their parts, to this partless unity of Parmenides which alleges to be the only thing.

Francis Cornford, in his evaluation of the role that Aristoteles and the dialogic situation play in the first hypothesis, could hardly err more profoundly. Cornford, persuaded that the dialogic method is a feature of literally no significance here, proposes to omit the role of Aristoteles in his transla-

tion. "It has been noticed from this point onwards the narrative form is abandoned and not a single name is mentioned. The dialogue becomes dramatic in form, and the speakers might as well be labeled A and B. The result is utterly unlike a Socratic conversation in which the chief speaker leads on his respondent, eliciting his opinions, securing his assent to each step and removing his doubts and difficulties. It may be Plato's intention to point the contrast between eleatic procedure and what he and Socrates understood by dialectic, the art of philosophic conversation in a cooperative search for truth. Since Aristoteles contributes nothing, nothing is gained by casting the arguments into the form of question and answer. The convention becomes tiresome and cumbrous; it only increases the difficulty of following the reasoning. I have accordingly dropped it in the translation" (109).[14]

To the contrary, Aristoteles contributes a great deal, for he represents the enforced criteria of the profession of ignorance. One will look in vain in Parmenides' poem to find the goddess's pupil so much as ask a question. Aristoteles, by contrast, is given authority to indict the goddess's core claims.

THE FIRST HYPOTHESIS

The debate as to the subject of the first hypothesis is obviously pivotal. There have been two main answers given, and a third explanation which involves a combination of the first two. Harold Cherniss and W. K. C. Guthrie advance the view that we are defending, that the subject of the first hypothesis is Parmenides' thesis of the "one Being," that is, the one from his famous poem.[15] This view encompasses a distinct minority of commentators in recent decades. Much more popular is the view that it is Plato's theory of forms which is being subjected to a critical investigation in hypothesis 1.[16] A few argue that the first hypothesis addresses both Parmenides' Being and Socrates' forms together, indiscriminately.[17]

Cornford concedes that the arguments set forth in the first hypothesis and elsewhere in the *Parmenides* "criticize Parmenides' own doctrine of the one being. But some of them apply also to the theory of forms, as the context here leads us to expect" (106). Cornford elaborates: "it is a natural inference that a main purpose of the whole exercise must be to point out that even the apparently simplest terms, such as 'one' and 'being,' which will appear at the threshold of any metaphysical discussion, are dangerously ambiguous" (110). "Different hypotheses are expressed in the same form of words: 'if a one (or the one) is,' or 'is not.' Since they lead to various incompatible conclusions, the reader is expected to infer that the formula is ambiguous, and to make out for himself what sort of 'one' and what sort of 'others' are being discussed on each occasion." "No one had squarely faced the fact that

the simplest words may have many different meanings, which must be defined before serious argument can begin" (111).[18]

Cornford's interpretation of the first hypothesis trades rather heavily on the distinction between "sense" and "reference" from the analytic philosophy. One major obstacle to Cornford's view is that during the course of the argument presented in the *Parmenides*, Plato utterly devastates any such distinction. It becomes evident that the first and second hypothesis adhere single-mindedly to the conviction that for each single character indicated by a common name, despite its being indicated in a multitude of objects, it always remains the same with itself. Indeed, this has been Socrates' rejoinder to Zeno and Parmenides from the earliest discussions in this dialogue, and it is the thesis which Plato will have Parmenides himself prove, beyond a shred of doubt, as the dialogue proceeds. We will come to these passages shortly.

In the case of Ryle, we are acquainted with a rhetorical style which owes much to Parmenides' thesis itself, over the long course of its career. Ryle appears to believe that with simple vehemence, he can conjure the appearance of evidence such as may justify his denunciation of the view that it is Parmenides' thesis which is under consideration. "The collocation of the particle with a neuter adjective is a perfectly familiar way of expressing what we express by an abstract noun, and the only excuse for rendering it by 'the one' in this dialogue is the presupposition that of course Parmenides must be discussing his monistic theory, for which there is no internal evidence whatsoever" (143).[19]

Ryle's roar is certainly ferocious. Yet, once Ryle feels confident that we will not press our claim, he softens his voice to the purr of a kitten. "The one motive which I feel fairly sure did not much influence Plato is the one usually mentioned, namely that he wished to discuss Parmenidean monism. This insipid Unitarianism has no special bearings on the theory of forms, and no special bearings on more general questions of logic, and I see no reason why Plato should have interested himself much in it, or much evidence that he did so, whereas there is plenty of evidence internal to his dialogue and adjacent dialogues that he was very much interested in the theory of forms and very much interested also in more general questions of logic. Parmenides has opted to practice his Zenonian operations upon one selected concept: that of unity. But he does not suggest that the resultant antinomies are peculiar to this concept. The implied suggestion is, rather, that antinomies of the same type could be shown to result from operations either upon any other concepts or upon some other concepts" (148).

Runciman too instructs us that we ought not to succumb to the belief that Parmenides is discussing his own theory in the first hypothesis. "Before proceeding further to examine the purpose and result of this exercise, it must first be established that it is the same concept which is being discussed throughout, and that this concept is the Platonic form of unity" (100). "Al-

though certain arguments of the second part could be construed as referring to Parmenidean monism, it is clearly impossible to so interpret them all; and if Plato wished to discuss Parmenidean monism, he would not have done it in this intermittent way" (101).[20]

We can make a couple of observations that should prove of use. The unity under review in the first hypothesis is one that has laid claim to an enumerated list of attributes: circularity, perfection, sameness with itself, limits, and being. Clearly, it is not possible that Plato's theory of unity, in line with his *Phaedo* theory of forms, can lay claim to any of these attributes. It can quickly be illustrated, however, that these are all attributes which Parmenides has claimed for *his* unity, his unity of "being."

In the first hypothesis, it is Parmenides' thesis about unity that is under critical review, but it is Plato's *Phaedo* theory of forms, the Platonic thesis as to what the cause and nature of unity is, that applies and enforces the critique. Parmenides' unity, which in Socrates' stated view encompasses "all things," would have to be "many" in order to accommodate the Eleatic assertion. Yet in Plato's view, unity can have no cause other than the nature of unity, nor can it, as a nature, so much as admit one other thing into itself, since that would cause it to be other than itself, or many.

The view advanced by Cherniss and Guthrie, however prosaic and commonsensical, must be conceded to be the correct answer unless and until some plausible refutation has been proposed. In Cherniss's view, it is absurd to suggest that Parmenides' poem is not the actual focus. "The quotations from the poem and the references to it are so frequent in Plato's writings that we may be sure when Plato was writing the *Parmenides* he had nothing more vividly before his mind than the poem which he mentions whenever he talks about the paradoxes of being" (130). "That Parmenides and his poem are the butt at which the second part of the dialogue is aimed is put beyond doubt by the statement he makes just before beginning, when he says 'since we've decided to play a laborious game, let's begin with me myself and my hypothesis'" (130).[21] As Guthrie says, it is Parmenides' one that is the subject. "The plan of the exercise is to take the Eleatic hypothesis of unity and follow out the consequences of its being (a) true and (b) false, in each case considering the effects on the one itself and 'the others'" (54).[22]

In the first hypothesis, Parmenides is forced by Plato to enumerate all of the natures which his goddess has overtly referred to in "the way of truth," and in this same first hypothesis, Parmenides is compelled to admit that absolutely none of these parts can be reconciled with his thesis of the partless being, the unity which encompasses "all things."

It will be useful to compare the assertions from the "Way of Truth" as they are picked up and examined, and finally surrendered by Parmenides in Plato's dialogue. Parmenides, as we move into the first hypothesis, has stated that he intends to examine his own thesis. Parmenides' thesis is "that Being

has no coming-into-being and no destruction, for it is whole of limb, without motion, and without end. And it never was, nor will be, because it is now, a whole all together" (Freeman, frag. 8, p. 43).

Plato's Parmenides is made to deliver the telling blow almost immediately. "Well then, said Parmenides, if there is a one, of course the one will not be many. Consequently, it cannot have any parts or be a whole. For a part is a part of a whole, and a whole means that from which no part is missing; so, whether you speak of it as a 'whole' or as 'having parts,' in either case the one would be many and not one; but it is to be one and not many. Therefore, if the one is to be, it will not be a whole nor having parts" (137cd).

Parmenides' goddess, in the poem, certainly never reveals any disquiet about filling her pot of pristine and divisionless unity with a wide variety of distinct natures. Her conception of unity can evidently reconcile divisionlessness and partlessness, alongside unlike characters and natures. It is Plato's *Phaedo* theory of forms, his thesis about the cause of the form unity, which supplies the critical engine in the discussion of the first hypothesis. The very first inference that Parmenides is forced to draw, based on his alleged seamless "one," is that it can't be many, that is, that it can't contain anything other than its own single nature. As soon as that postulate is asserted, Parmenides' thesis is fated for destruction, and the first hypothesis simply plays that out.

In "The Way of Truth," the goddess several times characterizes the one as a whole. In fragment 8 (line 2), the goddess describes the one as "ungenerated and imperishable, entire." The goddess also states that the one has perfectly fixed, unalterable borders, that is, *limits*. On line 5, she states that "it is all together, one, indivisible." The goddess insists that "it is not lawful that Being should be incomplete, for it is not defective" (8:32), but Plato's Parmenides in hypothesis 1 is compelled to abandon the claim that the one has a limit, for "if the one has neither beginning nor end it is without limits."

The next aspect of this "one" taken up for investigation is shape. The goddess has claimed that "since now its limit is ultimate, being is in a state of perfection from every viewpoint, like the volume of a spherical ball, and equally poised in every direction from its center" (8:42–44). In hypothesis 1, Plato has Parmenides admit that "if the one had either a straight or a round shape, it would have parts and so be many. Therefore since it has no parts, it is neither straight nor round" (138a).

The goddess, in "the way of truth," asserts that the one has place, that "it lies by itself and remains thus where it is perpetually, for strong necessity holds it in the bonds of a limit" (8:30–31). Plato's Parmenides is compelled to disavow this claim, for that which is indivisible cannot have any such parts or any parts whatsoever: "Further, being such as we have described, it cannot be anywhere, for it cannot be either (a) in another, or (b) in itself" (138a). "Now we saw that it could not *be* anywhere in anything" (138d).

The goddess characterizes the one being as at rest, as being without movement of any kind. “Therefore justice did not loosen it in her fetters and move it either to come to be or to be perishing but holds it fast” (8:13–15). Plato’s Parmenides, on the other hand, *withdraws* this claim for his one. He has no choice in the matter. “On the other hand, we also assert that it cannot actually be in anything. Consequently it can never be in the same place or condition, because then it would be in that selfsame place or condition, and we saw that it could not be either in itself or in anything else. The one, then, is never in the same place or condition. But what is never in the same place or condition is not at rest or stationary” (139a).

In “The Way of Truth,” the goddess says that the one is the same with itself: “remaining the same and in the same state, it lies by itself and remains thus where it is perpetually, for strong necessity holds it in the bondage of a limit” (8:29–31). In hypothesis 1, Plato’s Parmenides surrenders this character of sameness for the one, because sameness is not identical in character to “one,” but rather is a second character or part, like any and all of the others enumerated. “Nor can it yet be the same as itself. For the character of unity is one thing, the character of sameness another. This is evident because when a thing becomes the same as something, it does not become ‘one’” (139c).

By the same reasoning, the one cannot properly be said to be equal to anything, neither to another nor to itself; for to be equal to oneself is to be the same as oneself, and we have seen that this claim has already gone by the boards. The goddess however does claim equality for Parmenides’ one: “nor is it divisible, since it is all alike and not any more in degree in some respect which might keep it from uniting” (8:23–24). “For it must not be either at all greater or smaller in one regard than another” (8:44–45). The confession that Parmenides is assigned to deliver in hypothesis 1 spares no shred of the goddess’s argument: “But if ‘like’ means that of which the same thing is true, a thing that is unlike itself or another will be that which can be truly said to be different from itself or another. And the one, it appears, cannot be said to be different in any way. Consequently, the one is in no way unlike either itself or anything else. Therefore, the one cannot be like or unlike either another or itself. Further, the one, being such as we have described, will not be either (a) equal or (b) unequal either to itself or to another” (140b).

Parmenides’ goddess says that the one should not be spoken of in reference to past or future, but only in reference to a permanent present. “Only one story of a way is still left: that a thing is” (8:1). “It never was nor will be, since it is now altogether, one, indivisible” (8:5–6). “Thus becoming has been extinguished and perishing is unheard of” (8:21–22). Plato’s Parmenides in hypothesis 1 is forced to allow that this one cannot have any relationship to time at all, not even to the present:

> Consequently, what is becoming older than itself must also at the same time be becoming younger than itself. Now in the process of becoming it cannot take a longer or shorter time than itself; it must take the same time with itself, whether it is becoming, or is or has been, or will be. So it seems, any one of the things that occupy time and have a temporal character must be of the same age as itself and also be becoming at once both older and younger than itself. But we saw that none of these characters can attach to the one. Therefore the one has nothing to do with time and does not occupy any stretch of time. (141de)

For any individual or body can be characterized in its relationship to time. We refer again to "sticks and stones," "you and I and all the other things." There are three parts of time: past, present and future. Perishable bodies have a share in all three parts, and this is what Plato is illustrating. An object, considered in terms of times past, which we express by the words "was" or "became," can be said to have become older than itself. That is, any object is now older than it used to be in time past. It can also be said to be becoming older than its earlier being. We can also look at the older part of ourselves, and observe that with every passing moment, that past is becoming more remote from the present. That *past* can be described as "becoming younger" than we currently are and are becoming. The past existence, when measured against the present and its becoming, will appear more and more distant from the present, and consequently, as we ourselves have a part that is forever becoming older than the past, so we all have a past that every day becomes "younger" than our present. Any object that exists in time becomes older than itself: two hours from now, it will be two hours older than it currently is; as for "younger than itself"—in two hours' time, the present moment will be comparatively younger than the time which has subsequently been reached by said object.

Parmenides is the one who has claimed that the "all is one." In any event, this is Socrates' interpretation of the argument. Plato has, in the first hypothesis, demonstrated that unity, strictly speaking, cannot be anything other than the nature of unity: it cannot be many, upon pain of ceasing to be itself. Parmenides, who has wedded his thesis to one "whole" without division, is made to feel the pain as all of the various characters that he attempted to identify as attributes of a partless entity are stripped off, held up for examination, and discarded. Nothing could be more dramatic, however, than when Plato lets us see that this unity of Parmenides cannot so much as encompass the "being" which is his favorite of all natures. And it is none other than little Aristoteles who recognizes that this is the implication of Parmenides' thesis: that it is a perfect unity which would like to have additional natures inside itself. Yet this cannot follow.

For her part, the goddess insists that the one not only can be named, but that it must be named. "It is necessary to assert and conceive that this is Being" (5:1). The unity that the goddess claims for her one cannot accommo-

date any parts whatsoever, but she has tried to give the appearance of being able to make such utterances with propriety. Plato's Parmenides, in stark contrast, is made to testify as follows:

> It cannot, then, "be" even to the extent of being one, for then it would be a thing that is and has being. Rather, if we can trust such an argument as this it appears that the one neither is nor is at all. And if a thing is not you cannot say that it "has" anything, or that there is anything "of" it. Consequently, it cannot have a name or be spoken of, nor can there be any knowledge or perception or opinion of it. It is not named or spoken of, not an object of opinion nor an object of knowledge, not perceived by any creature. Now can this possibly be the case with the one? (142a)

Aristoteles, who has been selected for his lack of sophistication but also for his quality of candor, finds no trouble responding. "I do not think so, said Aristoteles." If Parmenides refuses to admit these things about his one, he would no longer be able to speak even if he had wanted to. Instead, he is going to be compelled to grant that the one must indeed have parts. It must *have* being. It must be characterized, accordingly, in such a way that the goddess's thesis is undone. But more important is the proof set out in hypothesis 2. In hypothesis 2, the defeat of Parmenides' thesis has become the effectual foundation for the remainder of the dialogue.

At the end of the first hypothesis, Plato makes it triply clear to us that the discussants are in search of an object with which they may begin mutual conversation, that is, to have a common object. This common object must be one of the perishables, that can be perceived and named and spoken about, as indeed Socrates' interlocutors must have these freedoms of reference and speech, if they are to so much as begin to call attention to the forms or patterns which language reveals to us as so intimately bound up with the objects of our experience and our consciousness thereof.

If the first hypothesis culminates in silence, in nothingness, in the discovery that the thesis under consideration has been nothing but a false phantom of an idea—the refutation of the first thesis, in the second hypothesis, brings before us a very different direction. For the *second* hypothesis is a proof of the existence of the perishable objects—one that does not originate in perception, but one which nevertheless, in the course of its progress, vindicates perception, as the means to knowing real and true objects. Of the one there, Parmenides is given to say that "also, it can be said to have something, and there can be some thing of it, alike in past, present and future. So there can be knowledge and opinion and perception of it; in fact, we are now exercising all of these activities with respect to it. Further, it will have a name and can be spoken of; indeed it actually is being named and spoken of" (155de).

TRANSITION TO THE SECOND HYPOTHESIS

When Parmenides, held strictly to account by the *Phaedo* theory of the forms, is brought to admit that his unity cannot properly be said to even have *being*—the Eleatic thesis is irrevocably broken. What is real and can be talked about must both be a unity *and* have being. Whatever can serve as a common object for our discourse must be nameable, and perceptible, and it must be something that we can entertain opinions about. All of these meditations begin, though, with Plato's proof that such an object of discourse must have the coequal natures of unity and being.

That "unity" cannot encompass being has been strictly proved. In line with the *Phaedo* theory of causation, the unity in any object can only be caused by the nature of unity itself, and *nothing else*. Now if being is to be accorded some dignity and recognition among the real things, it will have to be as a distinct nature, for unity does not indicate "being," and being does not indicate unity. And yet a unity that has being must be conceded as the original qualifications for an object that can be so much as referenced or talked about, and that is exactly how the second hypothesis of the *Parmenides* opens.

The "being" that the one must have as a part is both irresistible and unavoidable: from this single moment the proof of coming to be is immanent. Thus, when Sayre argues that this being conceded to be necessary for the one is somehow *separate* from the one, we have great cause to inquire. According to Sayre, Parmenides has kept the verb "being" somehow separate from his "one." "By carefully distinguishing the verbal force of 'exists' from that of 'unity,' Parmenides makes clear his intent to treat the being attributed to the one of H2 as something distinct from the one itself" (165). "Parmenides' current argument is to show that the one of H2 necessarily is such that it *might* be a whole and have parts" (165).[23] We have shown that this is not possible; for Plato, the move is not voluntary, but irreversibly follows. As soon as "being" is conceded to be something that the one *has*, then we already have a whole of two parts. There is no "might" about it.

Here is what the text actually says: "Start afresh, then, and consider. If a one *is*, it cannot be, and yet not *have* being. So there will also be the being which the one has, and this is not the same thing as the one; otherwise that being would not be *its* being, nor would it, the one, have that being, but to say 'a one is' would be tantamount to saying 'a one is one.' But in fact the supposition whose consequences we are to consider is not 'if a one is one,' but 'if a one is.' This implies that 'is' and one' stand for different things. Thus the short statement 'a one is' simply means that the one has being" (142bc).

In the second hypothesis, "whole" and "parts" are the very next things that Plato proves from the concession Parmenides has made, that the one must have being:

> Let us, then, once more state what will follow, if a one is. Consider whether this supposition does not necessarily imply that the one is such as to have parts. That follows in this way. Since "*is*" is asserted to belong to this *one* which is, and "one" is asserted to belong to this *being* which is one, and since "*being*" and "*one*" are not the same thing, but both belong to the same thing, namely that "one which is" that we are supposing, it follows that it is "one being" as a whole, and "one" and "being" will be its parts. So we must speak of each of these parts, not merely as a part, but as part of a whole. (142cd)

The distinction between whole and part, which commentators take endless delight in attempting to apply to Plato's theory of forms, truly reveals its force here in the gradual refutation of the Eleatic thesis. For the proof of the natures of the "whole" and the "part" is the next move that Plato makes, after he has established the reality of the coequal natures of being and unity. Plato, at this point, is but a couple of steps away from proving the reality of coming into being. For the nature of a whole, aside from being a container for an infinite number of parts, is also something that must exist as something that *is contained*. To be a whole, the object must be complete, and this means that it must have all of the extremities which Parmenides' goddess has taken such extraordinary pains to drive away from our consciousness, and to render into a status of silly or naïve sayings.

The object which has the nature of a whole must have the extremities of a whole in order to be complete, and that which is not complete cannot be called a whole. Among these extremities that a whole must have include time past, present, and future; that is to say, among the extremities that a whole must be conceded to have, include having come into being, existing in the present, and being slated to pass away in the future. We can spend some more time talking about Plato's discovery of the realities of the natures of whole and parts in this dialogue, as we proceed to the more pointed discussion of the irresistible reality of coming into being as a distinct part of any whole of parts.

Plato makes it plain right here that it is impossible to put a limit to the number of parts that must be conceded to be in this one body. "Therefore, any 'one' which is is a whole and also has parts. Again, take each of these two parts of the one being—its unity and its being. Unity can never be lacking to the part 'being,' nor being to the part 'unity.' Thus each of the two parts, in its turn, will possess both unity and being; any part proves to consist of at least two parts, and so on forever by the same reasoning. Whatever part we arrive at always possesses these two parts, for a 'one' always has being,

and a 'being' always has unity. Hence any part always proves to be two and can never be one" (142de).

To have parts is necessarily to change, for Plato, because to be a body is necessarily to have parts. For Plato, every body whatsoever has "come to be." Once Parmenides has been brought to confess that in order to talk at all, we must begin our talk about a whole of parts, he is confessing that in order to be able to talk at all, we must begin with reference to body, body with parts. That it is impossible for body not to have parts. And once the first part is conceded, all of the rest follow, not the least of which is existing in a place (145e).

The admission wrung from Parmenides that the one must have being therefore allows for the utterance of a simple statement: the one is, or has being. The two terms do not indicate the same thing. The one is not identical with being; the "one" names a body, which for Plato is all wholes of parts. "One" and "being" are parts of a whole, Plato demonstrates; the concession that the terms "part" and "whole" have real existence is indisputably proved as soon as it is conceded that any body must have being predicated of it. So now we have four terms: one, being, part, whole. There is one body that has being; being is a part of the one, and what is truly something that can be indicated and spoken of (the one) cannot be separated from being.

This is to say, as Plato unfolds his reasoning, that we can indeed talk about a part of the whole without at the same time talking about the other parts. We would not have been able to speak at all without the admission of the first two parts, one and being, and that the one has being, or partakes of it. But now that we have a whole of parts, we can zero in on any part in that whole, and state that it must have a unity of its own and a being of its own. There is nothing eristic about this argument. There is nothing contradictory about this argument. Because just as these characters signify different things, so never—not in any place in the second part of the dialogue or elsewhere, are the opposite forms allowed to mix. The one that has being indicates the body of which a predication must be made, in order to speak of it. But as a part in the whole "one being," one has being in a different way.

"Being," when it is said to be that which "the one" cannot lack if it is to be spoken of and referred to, that is, articulated or indicated at all, represents the predicate that states the action of the object "one." But if "being" is then contemplated as a part of a whole, and if the characters "part" and "whole" have been secured already from the simple admission that this is what "the one is" manifests (a whole of two parts)—then in this aspect being has a unity which is its own as a part. This unity of being as a part is not the unity of the body that has being. *Unity, as a self-identical character, is shared in by the two different parts*.

And this makes a great deal of difference, because as soon as the whole of parts is revealed to be implicit in the simplest object that a human being can

indicate, "a one is" or "a one has being," then simultaneously with this admission, there is the further step that a single character or form is applied to different things while nevertheless remaining the same with itself. In other words, it brings us back to the accusation that Parmenides had made against Socrates in part 1 of the dialogue, when Parmenides had attacked the relationship between forms and particulars.

Parmenides said, in the first part, as follows: "I like the way you make out that one and the same thing is in many places at once, Socrates. You might as well spread a sail over a number of people and then say that the one sail as a whole was over them all" (131b). Socrates, for his part, had said this in defense of his theory of forms: "But, Parmenides, the best I can make of the matter is this—that these forms are as it were patterns fixed in the nature of things. The other things are made in their image and are likenesses, and this participation they come to have in the forms is nothing but their being made in their image" (132d).

Parmenides, in other words, once he has been made to admit the distinction between whole and part, and make a statement that supplies both parts conjoined, ends up, without any possibility of escape, admitting too, that there is a form "being" which is *distributed* to very many particulars, without ever indicating any character other than itself. The form stays the same, but it is in many places. Parmenides, simply by virtue of being brought to admit, before the bar of the profession of ignorance, that we must begin our discourse with a reference to a commonly existing body, has been brought to own the very theory of forms for which he had earlier so ridiculed Socrates. And so shall we all:

> Again, among these parts there cannot be any which is part of being and yet not *a* (one) part. If it *is*, then, so long as it is, it must always be some *one* part; it cannot be *no* (not one) part. Consequently, unity must belong to every part of being, and be lacking to none, smaller or greater. And unity, being one, cannot be in many places at the same time. Further, that which is divided into parts must be as many as its parts. So we were wrong to say just now that being was distributed into the "greatest" multitude of parts. Its parts are not more numerous than those into which unity is distributed, but equal in number, for nothing that *is* lacks unity, and nothing that is *one* lacks being; the two maintain their equality all through. It appears, then, that unity itself is parceled out by being, and is not only many but indefinitely numerous. (144cd)

The *Parmenides* never abandons the foundation which is achieved by compelling Parmenides to admit that his "one" must have parts, and the reasons which caused Parmenides to admit that his one being has parts, leads in turn to the illustration of Plato's model of the forms, rather than being in any way an indictment of it.

It can be observed that Plato has Parmenides trumpet Socrates' theory of forms in the second hypothesis without the slightest amendment. "When you use any word, you use it to stand for something. You can use it once or many times, but in either case you are speaking of the thing whose name it is. However many times you utter the word, you must always mean the same thing. Now, 'different' is a word that stands for something: so when you utter it, whether once or many times, you are using it to stand for, or naming just that thing whose name it is. Hence when we say 'the others are different from the one,' and 'the one is different from the others,' we use the word 'different' twice, but nevertheless we always use it to stand for just that character whose name it is" (147d).

Readers of the *Republic* will find the previous passage familiar. "And in respect of the just and the unjust, the good and the bad, and all the ideas or forms, the same statement holds, that in itself each is one, but that by virtue of their communion with actions and bodies and with one another they present themselves everywhere, each as a multiplicity of aspects" (475e).

One additional observation should be made before proceeding with the second hypothesis. In the previous quotes from the *Republic* and the *Parmenides* on how one word always means the same thing, even when it is used to refer to multiple aspects of a single body, we are receiving instruction about the forms. It has been discussed, in an earlier chapter, how Socrates always refuses to allow a form, that is, the copies of the forms in the sensible objects, to be divided into parts. In the *Phaedo* (101c) he refuses to allow the form of duality to be divided into two instances of unity. He refuses, in the *Theaetetus*, to allow a complex of parts such as seven plus five to have a place in the wax block, and he even denies that there is a knowledge bird in the aviary which has parts (196ab). In the *Republic*, on the lower portion of the divided line, there is the perishable object and its "images." Those "images," likened to reflections in a mirror or on the surface of a lake, are not divisible: they are amenable to the hypothesis of participation that converts the image of the form itself into the object of what is now a scientific inquiry.

THE PROOF OF COMING TO BE

When Parmenides concedes that the one must have being, he simultaneously concedes the reality that the one is a whole of parts. One aspect of a "whole," which exists in relation to its parts, is that it is the limit of its parts. The parts can never exceed the whole. No matter how many of the infinite parts are taken up for consideration, the whole at that instant will be the container for all of those parts.

The whole itself can be considered in another aspect however. If the whole exists in one sense as the container for its parts, in that sense we can describe it as being self contained (145c). On the other hand, the whole can and indeed must be considered as a constituent of the perishable world. In that respect, it must have extremities: a beginning, a middle, and an end (145a). The whole, in other words, must itself be in a place, that is, it must be contained in the perceptible world. In that place, where the whole is not container but contained, it will have extremities. "If, then, the whole is not in several of its parts, nor in one, nor yet in all, it must be either in something else or nowhere at all. But if nowhere at all, it would be nothing, whereas it is a whole, and so, since (as a whole) it is not in itself, it must be in something else" (145e).

Plato often has Parmenides return to that very first proof, that the one must have being, in order to reveal the other facts which necessarily follow. The existence of the one in time present is also such a fact. "Since the one is one, of course, it has being, and to 'be' means precisely having existence in conjunction with time present, as 'was' or 'will be' means having existence in conjunction with past or future time. So if the one is, it is in time" (152a). Since the one is in time, it must have the parts that time has: it must have extremities in time, a beginning and a future, as well as a present. The one that exists in time must have a past and a present, in which case it has had to come to be from the thing it was in the part of time that is now past. Coming to be is proved in this deduction.

One issue raised in the secondary literature that directly bears on the issue of coming to be concerns Plato's theory of the "instant," that is, of the moment of change. During the second hypothesis, Plato spends a significant amount of time analyzing the nature of time in the instant where an object in motion comes to a rest, or vice versa. It is appropriate to raise the issue here because there are some scholars who say that Plato's perishables themselves, in said instants, actually cease to exist in time. That would certainly be a burden for any theory of coming to be.

Kenneth Sayre makes a clear version of such an argument: "The problem now is to identify the point at which this occurs. The reason there is a problem should already be apparent. At the precise point where the change from rest to motion, or vice versa, takes place, the thing undergoing change will be neither at rest nor in motion. But Aristotles has already agreed that there is no time in which a given thing is neither moving nor at rest. Since there must be some point at which the transition takes place, this point in some sense must be 'out of time'" (246).[24]

The passage, at 156cd, reads as follows: "But when, being in motion, it comes to a stand, or being at rest, it changes to being in motion, it cannot itself occupy any time at all for this reason. Suppose it is first at rest and later in motion, or first in motion and later at rest; that cannot happen to it without

its changing. But there is no time during which a thing can be at once neither in motion nor at rest. On the other hand it does not change without making a transition. When does it make the transition, then? Not while it is at rest or while it is in motion, or while it is occupying a time. Consequently the time at which it will be when it makes the transition must be that odd thing, the instant. The word 'instant' appears to mean something such that *from* it a thing passes to one or other of the two conditions. There is no transition *from* a state of rest so long as the thing is still at rest, nor *from* motion so long as it is still in motion, but this queer thing, the instant, is situated between the motion and rest; it occupies no time at all, and the transition of the moving thing to a state of rest, or of the stationary thing to being in motion, takes place to and from the instant."

Plato here is setting forth a teaching about how to characterize the moment of change. Plato argues that the "instant" in which change occurs does not occupy time. From this, Sayre suggests that Plato is admitting that the perishable beings must exist outside of time, in the manner of Parmenides' "one" that has been disposed of in the first hypothesis precisely because it is not capable of having parts (of which an instant must certainly be one, that is, one part of its existence as in undergoing change). "Now several commentators have observed that the condition of the one when situated at the instant of change is very much like the predicament of Parmenides' one under the first hypothesis. Indeed, Parmenides' final remarks at 157a deny the one a list of features that obviously overlap the denials under H1. It is tempting to conclude , in the face of this observation, that the final upshot of H2 actually reinstates the entirely negative results of H1" (251).[25]

In that passage of 157a that Sayre refers to, the "list of features" denied to the one are all instances of this same form of the "instant," that is, when an object is undergoing change. "The same holds good of its other transitions. When it passes from being in existence to ceasing to exist or from being nonexistent to coming into existence, it is then between certain motions and states; it is then neither existent nor non-existent, and it is neither coming into existence nor ceasing to exist" (157a).

First of all, it is only possible to talk about the problem of change as it relates to time when we have perishable bodies to talk about. The concrete object itself, which is the only thing that can undergo change of any sort, exists in times past, present, and future. The present time is not the past time, nor is it the future time, but what we have seen is that, according to Plato, that which exists in time will have all three parts of time. And one part is not the same as another part: the past is not the present; the present is not the future. The instant, then, is how Plato characterizes the moment of change. We could refer to it as the boundary line between what was (is now past) and what currently is (in the present). Sayre's attempt to claim that Plato abstracts the whole object itself from time is a confused account of Plato's argument.

What Plato is accounting for is change, the moment of change—which as such, given what the parts of time are, cannot itself consist in anything but a moment. The body itself must always be either at rest or in motion, and Plato's explanation of the instant is his way of explaining how change occurs without the forms overlapping.

One can lay to rest, once and for all, the perplexities of Empedocles' four roots, of Anaxagoras's seeds. For all those bodies as developed under the shadow of Parmenides' now disproven argument about partless body, were said not to be capable of existing in parts of time past or future. Here Plato is making us understand that nothing can exist in time present that does not have a past existence and a future time as well. In hypothesis 3 Plato will take up the larger and more explosive sorts of change, generation and destruction, which Parmenides' goddess also claims to have banished from the realm of knowledge. Nothing terribly new is added in that hypothesis, however; the goddess's argument has long since been permanently disproved before that passage is reached.

What is at rest never is in motion, in the same aspect. What is in motion never is at rest, in that same aspect. So if we are talking about the change from a man seated on a bicycle, at rest, to the bicycling in motion—Plato would characterize the moment of change between rest and motion as an instant. He does not suggest that the bike and its rider have become timeless entities such as Parmenides' partless one.

ON THE NATURE OF BECOMING

Plato's theory of forms is, in its most essential aspect, the drive toward the science of definition: the attempt to acquire knowledge that will never alter in any aspect. This knowledge cannot be of sensible objects, which are themselves known to us through the copies of the forms which are in them, or in whichever way one may wish to describe that relation of participation between perishable object and form which Plato's Parmenides too has now been made to admit.

The sense in which Plato regards the perishable objects as forever in a state of becoming, and never fully being, has stimulated several interpretations. Of the arguments made, we are concerned with the one that imputes to the perishable objects, in Plato's theory, a condition of Heraclitean flux. This argument has a long history, and it has been made in the relatively recent past most notably by Cornford.[26] Exactly what is this becoming that all the perishable objects are forever engaged in, and in what sense do these perishable objects never fully attain to being? Does this mean that the perishable objects themselves, and our perception of them in their parts which are as copies to

the forms, are mere illusions which cannot serve as Plato intends them to serve, that is, as the foundation for hypothesis unto the eternal forms themselves?

Some recent scholars think so. Robert Bolton argues that in the *Phaedo*, Plato holds the theory that the perishable objects are in such a state of flux that we cannot have stable perception of even the copies of the forms. "In the *Phaedo* the faculty which we employ in apprehending these objects is sensation (79a, c). The state of sensation is characterized there as one in which the mind 'wanders and is stirred up and dizzy as if it were drunk, because it is in contact with objects which wander and are stirred up and dizzy" (79c) (83). "In the light of our discussion of the argument," Bolton had written earlier in the article, "we can rephrase the question as follows: Did Plato ever believe the absurd view demolished in the *Theaetetus* that no predicate is strictly applicable over time to objects in the category of becoming? Or did he simply believe the weaker thesis that only flow predicates are strictly applicable to such objects over time? The answer is that in the *Phaedo* and in the *Republic* Plato commits himself to the stronger thesis" (76).[27]

Michael Frede, in his discussion of the phenomena of becoming in Plato's characterization of the perishable objects, ends up in a place rather like that of Bolton. "In characterizing the objects of experience as constituting a realm of becoming because they lack natures or essences which could count for their appearance, Plato describes them as if they have to be seen as something which is missing something that it should have, which it is pretending to have, which it misleads us into thinking it has, which only has the look of the real thing, which only is an imitation of the real thing, which strives to try to be like the real thing" (51). "His assumption that these objects constitute a realm of becoming by no means is the innocuous, vague assumption that the ordinary objects of experience are subject to all kinds of change. It is a far more precise and highly questionable assumption. It is the assumption that the objects of experience lack a nature so as to be anything, properly speaking, that they just have the look or appearance of being something and hence have to be understood in terms of, or rather in contrast with, those things that really are something because they have a nature so as to be this way, and not just give the appearance of being this way" (52).[28]

The discussion that we have been having about Plato's theory of the "instant" should help to clarify some things. The instant is Plato's definition of the moment of transition. Plato has denied that there ever is a time when a thing both is and is not a specific character, *if* we are talking about a perishable body, in a certain aspect, participating in a form. Plato has never made any bones about the distinction between the copies of the forms and the forms themselves, but he does believe that the hypothesis we need to get from the copies of the forms to the forms themselves can, at a certain point, become entirely certain, scientific knowledge. The theory of the instant

wholly denies, as Socrates himself denies in the *Theaetetus*, that the perishable objects are engaged in a relentless kind of bodily flux so that things are no more one form than its opposite at any given moment. There is no overlap. The opposite forms do not mix.

Moreover, Plato's discussion of the three parts of time in the *Parmenides* is much more informative on this issue than has been recognized. As noted, for Plato, any object that can be spoken about must be a perishable object, first of all. Intellectual objects that we can only reach with the help of an hypothesis added on to our reflection on the many instances of a form cannot precede the perishables in our order of learning. Every object that can be said to have being, as a perishable object, that is, which can be perceived and spoken about and named, as the argument in hypothesis 2 sets forth—must also be in place and exist in time. Of time, there are three parts, and no object can have just one part of time. It has to exist with a past and a present and a future. And if it is not yet existing obviously it does not have any part of time, and if it has ceased to exist it has ceased to exist.

In the discussion in *Parmenides*' hypothesis 2, Plato discloses how the object participates in the different kinds of time. Any perishable object must have a past, and it must have a future, and the present is the boundary line or the limit of the past, as it is the boundary line which is the limit for the time of the future. And the movement between past and present or between present and future can never contain any overlap between the two, as the discussion of the instant proves.

The point is that, for Plato, the "present" time for any perishable object is not a time in which we can properly speak of an object as "becoming." For the object in its present time, in this part of its time, Plato says that it is only appropriate to say of this object that in whatsoever character under consideration, it is not becoming *but is*. "Whereas, if it is true of anything which is becoming that it can never pass beyond the present, it constantly stops becoming when it is at the present, and it then *is* whatever it may be that it was becoming. This applies to the one. When, in becoming older, it coincides with the present, it stops becoming and *is* then older." "But the present is with the one always throughout all its existence, for at whatever time it is existing, it is existing 'now'" (152cd).

The arguments made by Bolton and Frede to the effect that the perishable objects are deceitful, as appearing to have a character that they do not possess, cannot therefore be true of Plato's theory. In the moment when a perceptible object is perceived to be in motion, it is in motion. In the moment when the perishable body is perceived to be at rest, it is at rest. The problem of "becoming," then, does not involve any radical instability of the objects in terms of their undergoing constant change. We can alert the reader here that Plato handles Heraclitus the same way he handles Parmenides: he makes his argument come under scrutiny via the profession of ignorance. Heraclitus, no

less than Parmenides, is shown in the *Theaetetus* not to be able to speak at all, if he is to own his theory and calibrate his speech accordingly.

The relationship between the copies of the forms which are in the perishable bodies and the eternal forms themselves is one other possible way Plato might mean his claim that the perishable bodies are always becoming. But this is really something that involves both the object under consideration and the soul's faculties which are called into play. The copies of the forms are in perishable bodies. Those perishable bodies, in our ordinary perception, are the same bodies which exist in time and have three parts of time. We recognize the copies of the forms and name them; indeed, this is what languages are made out of, the patterns that we recognize. But in perception, as discussed in the last chapter, our recognition of the forms is virtually automatic and we do not grasp in a powerful way what the form itself actually is. In order to do that, in order to possess that knowledge we must make the form itself the object of our inquiry. This means that we must leave behind the perishable object in which the copies of the forms are properly perceived and take the form itself for our object. Plato makes this step through the hypothesis of participation: it is the bridge between the lower and upper divisions of the divided line in *Republic* VI, as it is the way Plato explains the beauty of a beautiful object in the *Phaedo*, and it is also discussed, as we have noted, here in the second hypothesis of the *Parmenides*, where Parmenides is made to testify as to what the forms are.

The perishable bodies are wholes of parts. Even though the perishable bodies are wholes which constitute limits, still the number of their parts is limitless. When we talk about copies of the forms in perceived instances, it is not possible to avoid talking about the perishable bodies that they are instantiated in. And those perishable bodies, the original objects of our experience and learning, as wholes of parts, can always be shown to have more parts. And though the whole must always be the limit for the parts, the parts themselves are unlimited. Which is to say that the whole, in relation to its parts, is engaged in a process of infinite becoming. What is not limited cannot be known fully, and this is why Plato wants us to make the transition between the copies of the forms in our perceptible experience and the forms themselves as objects of scientific knowledge.

The claim that frequently recurs in the secondary literature, that the world of the perishable objects is so untrustworthy that we must have knowledge of forms in order to know the particular objects, is not Plato's argument. Copies of the forms that we perceive in perishable objects are not drawn out in logos, in reflection and conscious efforts to master the pure content of that specific form, which is always the same with itself.

There is one final point to make about coming to be in the second hypothesis, which we take now to have been adequately proven. It is additional proof that Plato rejects the Heraclitean thesis about constant motion in all

parts of a body, that Parmenides is made to admit that the one body has a nature, and as such, can be said to come into its own or fullness of being at one stage of time rather than at another. This is very like that theory of cause in Aristotle's *Physics* (199a25–30), which he calls "for the sake of which," that is, a good, or excellence of completion toward which every natural object (and even those artificial objects made by artificers who look to a model form) inwardly strives. "Again, the one can only have come to be only in a way consistent with its own nature. Now we saw that the one has parts, and hence a beginning, an end, and a middle. And the beginning of anything, whether it be the one itself or any one of the others, always comes into being first, and after the beginning, all the rest up to the end. Moreover, by 'all the rest' we shall mean parts of the whole or one, and this itself comes to be, as a one or whole, at the same moment as the end. But the end is the last part to come into being, and it is the nature of the one to come into being simultaneously with the last. Hence, if the one must come to be in a way consistent with its nature, we must say it is the nature of the one, as having come into being at the same time with the end, to come later than all the others" (153ce). There is such a part, in the perishables, which marks their fullness: call it their prime or maturity, characters utterly incompatible with the Heraclitean thesis of flux.

NOTES

1. I will be using the translation by A. H. Coxon in this chapter, except in those passages attributed to Kathleen Freeman's *Ancilla to Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996). Coxon's translation is in *The Fragments of Parmenides* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1986). Francis Cornford's translation of Plato's *Parmenides* will be the sole reference for that work. From Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, eds., *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).
2. *Parmenides' Lesson*, 59.
3. Harold F. Cherniss ("Parmenides and the *Parmenides* of Plato," *American Journal of Philology* 53 [1932]: 125) has called attention to the recalcitrant nature of Parmenides from Plato's vantage point. Arthur L. Peck also does so in "Plato's *Parmenides*: Some Suggestions for Its Interpretation," *Classical Quarterly* 3 (1953): 141.
4. Robert G. Turnbull, *The Parmenides and Plato's Late Philosophy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 19.
5. Kelsey Wood, *Troubling Play: Meaning and Entity in Plato's Parmenides* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2005), 2.
6. *Parmenides' Lesson*.
7. Gregory Vlastos, "The Third Man Argument in the *Parmenides*," *Philosophical Review* 63 (1954): 319–49.
8. Arthur L. Peck, "Plato versus Parmenides," *Philosophical Review* 71 (1962): 161.
9. Peck, "Plato's *Parmenides*: Some Suggestions for Its Interpretation," 126.
10. For Vlastos's argument, see *Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 58.
11. *Plato's Late Philosophy*, 23.

12. R. E. Allen, *Plato's Parmenides* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 109–11.
13. Gilbert Ryle, "Plato's *Parmenides*," *Mind* 48 (1939): 130.
14. Francis MacDonald Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides* (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1957).
15. Cherniss, "The *Parmenides* of Plato," 130; W. K. C. Guthrie, *The Later Plato and the Academy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 53.
16. Walter Garrison Runciman, "Plato's *Parmenides*," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 64 (1959): 100–101; Turnbull, *Plato's Late Philosophy*, 39; Ryle, "Plato's Parmenides," 143–44; Wood, *Troubling Play*, 85, 130.
17. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 112–14; Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 158; Malcolm Schofield, "The Antinomies of Plato's *Parmenides*," *Classical Quarterly* 27 (1977): 147–48; Verity Harte, *Plato on Parts and Wholes: The Metaphysics of Structure* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 83; Mary M. McCabe, "Unity in the *Parmenides*: The Unity of the *Parmenides*," 21. In Christopher Gill and Mary M. McCabe, *Form and Argument in Late Plato* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
18. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 105–14.
19. Ryle, "Plato's *Parmenides*," 143, 148.
20. Runciman, "Plato's *Parmenides*," 100–101.
21. Cherniss, "*Parmenides* of Plato," 130.
22. Guthrie, *The Later Plato*, 54.
23. *Parmenides' Lesson*, 165.
24. *Parmenides' Lesson*, 246.
25. *Parmenides' Lesson*, 251.
26. Francis M. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge* (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1957), 58–59. And also *Plato's Cosmology* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 23–24, 29, 178. Cf. Sayre, *Parmenides' Lesson*, 70–71.
27. Robert Bolton, "Plato's Distinction between Being and Becoming," *Review of Metaphysics* 29 (1975): 76.
28. Michael Frede, "Being and Becoming in Plato," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 6 (1988): 51–52.

Chapter Six

The *Theaetetus*: Plato's Proof That the Objects of Knowledge Are Indivisible

In our scholarship, there is a strong suggestion that the domain of perception and the domain of science are wholly distinct in Plato. There is a conviction that, whenever perception is the subject matter, and Plato is the author, that Plato must be attempting to prove to us that we must wholly surrender the world of perception in order to approach any kind of knowledge. Nor is this the only conviction that seems to govern current commentators on Plato.

There is also a common claim made to the effect that what we refer to as Plato's forms must somehow be the things we grasp, *before* we so much as contemplate ways of knowing perishable objects. It is as if the forms were in a mental category that did not either arise out of, or in any way depend on, the perceived world and our naming of the objects in it.

This is problematic. For Plato, there is no such thing as a form to talk about, unless we first have evidence of these patterns in our ordinary talk and representations of common objects. For Plato, the path to scientific knowledge begins with the ordinary use of names, and it obtains its original evidence there.

The *Theaetetus* is the dialogue where Plato addresses the second most powerful philosophical school to cast a pall over the evidentiary value of the ordinary use of names. Parmenides had been first, and we have evaluated how Plato copes with the Eleatics in the *Parmenides*. The present dialogue is about the Protagoreans, about those who claim to be free to decide for themselves what does or does not exist. The *Theaetetus* is the dialogue where Plato painstakingly investigates Protagoras's argument.[1]

In the *Theaetetus*, Plato really addresses two issues. One concerns Protagoras, and his argument that no one can compel him to admit the existence of objects which he, by the authority of his account of what perception is, does

not wish to admit the existence of. This bears upon a very large issue: whether knowledge can be said to be equivalent to an independent, private domain of perception.

The second major issue that Plato addresses in the *Theaetetus* concerns the relationship between the ordinary opinions and scientific knowledge. Ordinary opinion, in Plato's view, is the medium through which all of us, philosophers and laypersons, get introduced to the forms. Platonic philosophy calls our attention to the way we ordinarily use names, but it does not claim to alter this, or to contribute this.

Plato, when he takes up Protagoras's argument that "every man is the measure" of what exists, will attempt to refute the argument that knowledge just is perception. However, in the course of this argument, he will be attempting with equal tenacity to prove that perception provides us with our original evidence of the existence of the forms. In perception, as the wax block will later demonstrate, we all name the forms as images. Science, however, for Plato, is not about images. Science is about *logos*, intellectual investigation into images and what they are. Science is about definition. Science obtains its original evidence from the ordinary knowledge of images; but to become science, it must move past the images, into dialectical analysis of the single forms.

We have argued, importantly, that Socrates' theory of the forms is indeed metaphysics. It is a theory of causation, a theory of what makes objects and qualities that which they are. This theory of causation puts front and center the ordinary use of names, by which individuals indicate common objects to one another. The profession of ignorance brings us before this bar of common evidence and candor. The profession of ignorance also plays a significant role in the *Theaetetus*, in Socrates' examination of Protagoras's argument.

THE CHALLENGE POSED BY PROTAGORAS

The *Theaetetus* is not entirely dedicated to examining Protagoras's doctrine, but the amount of attention expended in the consideration of his arguments is duly exhaustive and thorough. Protagoras is the most famous of the teachers known as Sophists. He is familiar to Socrates, Theaetetus, and Theodorus as the man who holds to a certain maxim, the one widely reported from ancient sources as to Protagoras's teaching. "He says, you will remember, that 'man is the measure of all things-alike of the being of things that are and of the not-being of things that are not'" (*Theaetetus* 152a).

Francis Cornford and Theodor Gomperz[2] have both characterized Protagoras's doctrine as a rebuke to the Eleatic school of Parmenides. They say that

while Parmenides sought to extinguish the credibility of ordinary reports of physical reality, Protagoras means to reverse this situation by means of his defense of individual perception as the foundation of knowledge. Cornford states that "Protagoras, in conscious opposition to Parmenides, had flatly denied that 'what seems to men'—what seems real to our senses and true to our judgment—is to be condemned as unreal or false because it disagrees with the properties ascribed by Eleatic reasoning to a One Being which we can never perceive."[3] In this context, which Cornford labors hard to create, Protagoras would appear to represent the voice of the ordinary opinions, the same ones that Parmenides banished from respectable discourse and official accounts of truth. The goddess, to her selected pupil, promises him that "it is right that you should learn all things, both the steadfast heart of persuasive truth, and the beliefs of mortals, in which there is no true trust" (frag. 1:28–32).[4]

Cornford's interpretation of Protagoras is inadequate, however.[5] For Protagoras, no less than Parmenides, is announcing the liberation of the philosophically inclined individual from the authority of the ordinary opinions and the naming of objects commonly regarded as real. Furthermore, Parmenides' own poem, in the "Way of Seeming," suggests that he will wield a theory very much like that of Protagoras when it comes to engaging in debates and disputes with the ordinary speakers.

"Here I stop my trustworthy speech to you and thought about truth; from here onwards learn mortal beliefs, listening to the deceitful ordering of my words" (8:50–52). "All this arrangement I proclaim to you as plausible, thus no opinion of mortals shall ever overtake you" (60–61). "For as each man has a union of the much-wandering limbs, so is mind present to men; for it is the same thing which the constitutions of the limbs think, both in each and every man; for the full is thought" (frag. 16).

If perception is consigned, in "the way of seeming," to "the constitution of the limbs," private objects of perception would be a foregone conclusion. Nothing more would be possible. Philosophers of this persuasion would be at liberty to ascribe existence, or not to acknowledge existence, as they see fit. Is this the effectual signification of the statement that Parmenides makes in fragment 3—"because the same thing is there for thinking and being"?

Karl Reinhart has a sharp insight into the relationship between Parmenides' poem and Protagoras's doctrine. It was Parmenides' poem that opened up the very possibility of the division between "nature and convention," "physis and nomos." It is the denial of the common objects of discourse, anchored in the first part of Parmenides' poem, which made possible the new sophist teaching, the techniques for competitive advantage in argument. "We are at the cradle of the concepts physis-nomos. . . . It was Parmenides' epistemological relativism, proclaimed by him only with reference to the world of appearances, then transferred by Protagoras to all knowledge (the

homo mensura fragment obviously takes its point of departure from the Eleatics)—it was this relativism that brought ethical relativism in its train."[6]

Protagoras and Gorgias did not make their careers as spokespersons for the ordinary opinions. They made their careers by selling techniques of argument for competitive engagement to parents of means who wished for their sons to rise to positions of prominence.[7] The measure of advantage that the sophists could bestow originated in the use they could make of more sophisticated philosophical theories. Gorgias, as is well known, incorporated, in a half-digested and roughshod manner, significant chunks of the Eleatic argument. Some of those arguments deny that the perishable objects exist.

CORNFORD'S ACCOUNT OF THE *THEAETETUS*

Plato, in the *Theaetetus*, after making several lines of investigation and approach that remain anchored in evidence available to ordinary speech, finally switches gears. He claims that Protagoras, not unlike Gorgias, actually rests his teaching on a far more sophisticated doctrine. This doctrine of perception, which has come to be called "the flux doctrine" in the secondary literature, links Protagoras to Heraclitean theory. That theory of Heraclitus, certainly as distant as can be from the ordinary opinions, indicates that everything is always in every kind of conceivable motion, and that the objects which ordinary speakers take to be the true objects of their experience, are not so.

Cornford approaches the *Theaetetus* much like his predecessor Henry Jackson did.[8] Cornford does not examine the *Theaetetus* as a separate text in its own right, but rather obtains his bearings from a view he has of Plato's dialogues as a whole. In the grid which Cornford imposes over Plato's theory, it is indicated that Plato has retreated from his earlier doctrine of forms. In the *Phaedo*, as Cornford allows, Plato holds that the perishable objects can be known along with the forms. In the *Theaetetus*, Cornford argues, the *Phaedo* doctrine has been abandoned. "The theory of forms as stated in the *Phaedo*, was meant to deal with both aspects of the problem bequeathed by Parmenides. The eternal and intelligible forms were to provide rational thought with objects of knowledge. The transient existence or 'becoming' of sensible things in the world of appearances was to be grounded in the world of true being by some kind of participation; they were thus to be endowed with an ambiguous half-reality, not left, as in Parmenides' uncompromising system, totally unsupported. But our series of dialogues opens with a trenchant criticism of Plato's own theory as giving no intelligible account of the derivation of appearances from reality."[9]

Jackson, upon taking up the *Theaetetus* for examination, is already persuaded that Plato must be in process of abandoning his earlier doctrine of

forms. Jackson really isn't terribly interested in the *Theaetetus* for itself: "In the present paper then I propose to examine the *Theaetetus*, not in the expectation of obtaining much in the way of positive contribution to the later theory of ideas, but in the hope of fixing the relations in which this dialogue stands to those which more directly concern me" (243). "I now perceive that the elaborate inquiry contained in the *Theaetetus* might be introductory, not to that first sketch of the theory of ideas which we find in the *Republic* and the *Phaedo*, but to the more exact teaching of later years."[10]

Cornford could aptly be described as the forebear of the tradition in the secondary literature, which views the forms as specifically a moral domain. The claim that the forms are effectively a moral intuition of some sort enables the commentator to suggest that Plato's theory makes no claims upon ordinary knowledge of perishable objects. "Thus, by a series of steps, the reader acquainted with the earlier dialogues is led to see that the moral terms which Socrates was always discussing belonged to a distinct order of realities, and that knowledge of them cannot be extracted from impressions of sense. Throughout, the separation of forms is intertwined with and illustrated by the separation of the divine spirit from all dependence on the mortal body. The conclusion is that the two doctrines stand or fall together."[11]

First, it was never Plato's claim that the moral forms are in any way distinct from the other forms. It is also false to suggest that the perishable objects can only be known with the assistance of the abstract form. Things work rather in the reverse way for Plato. Plato's Socrates' theory of cause is simply how we recognize the things we name. We recognize them by virtue of the pattern or form that they are of. As we stated, ordinary opinion knows the forms as images. Plato's science is concerned with the forms as articulated definitions, a vastly more powerful form of knowledge. In the *Theaetetus*, nevertheless, Socrates will argue that inside the parameters of image, the ordinary opinions also have a domain within which their naming is infallible.

For the present moment, let us point out the place in the *Laches* (192a) where the form under discussion is courage. This is certainly a moral form, or would qualify as such. However, when Laches has trouble understanding the definition that is being requested from him, Socrates uses the example of "quickness" to illustrate. There is not the slightest indication that Laches is put off by this suggestion, nor is there the slightest suggestion by Socrates that the form of courage is to be learned in any distinct way.

In the *Meno*, Socrates is attempting to elicit a definition of virtue. Meno does not fully understand what is being asked of him. Meno, sharing the natural limitations of those whose thoughts are mostly bounded by images, does not comprehend the definition that he is being asked for. In order to clarify his point on the subject matter of virtue, Socrates employs an analogy about bees. "What would you say if I went on to ask, And is it in being bees that they are many and various and differ from one another? Or would you

agree that it is not in this respect that they differ, but in something else, some other quality like size or beauty?" (72b). Plato makes no qualifications whatsoever, to distinguish "quickness" or "bees" from the moral forms of courage and virtue, as Cornford would like us to believe he does.

The profession of ignorance is on display in the *Theaetetus* in a rather theatrical dress. Socrates, at the very outset of the dialogue, characterizes himself as a kind of "midwife," whose enterprise it is to help the people with whom he speaks, by testing their thoughts for truth and reality. The Socratic enterprise cannot so much as be conducted, if the *common* objects of discourse are suppressed or somehow invalidated. Socrates did not allow Parmenides to unseat him from the ground of evidence, the profession of ignorance, and he will not allow Protagoras's argument to throw him from this ground either.

"How absurd of you, never to have heard that I am the son of a midwife, a fine buxom woman called Phaenarete!" "Have you also been told that I practice the same art?" "It is true, though: only don't give away my secret. It is not known that I possess this skill; so the ignorant world describes me in other terms as an eccentric person who reduces people to a hopeless perplexity" (149a):

> My art of midwifery is in general like theirs; the only difference is that my patients are men, not women, and my concern is not with the body but with the soul that is in travail of birth. And the highest point of my art is the power to prove by every test whether the offspring of a young man's thought is a false phantom or instinct with life and truth. . . . I am so far like the midwife that I cannot myself give birth to wisdom, and the common reproach is true, that though I question others, I can myself bring nothing to light because there is no wisdom in me. The reason is this: Heaven constrains me to be a midwife, but has debarred me from giving birth. (150cd)

The doctrine sketched out by Socrates above is perhaps the most familiar in all of Plato's authentic dialogues. It is identical with Socrates' claim, in the *Apology*, that he does not teach others, as in transferring some private possession of his own. The object of his instruction, that is, pointing out the roles that memory and forms play in the common use of speech, is "open to everyone" (33b).

Socrates is quite clear here, also, as the lengthy examination of Protagoras continues, that to concede to Protagoras his doctrine would be to surrender Socrates' own art. If "every man is the measure," the midwife is dead. "Must we not suppose that Protagoras speaks in this way to flatter the ears of the public? I say nothing of my own case or of the ludicrous predicament to which my art of midwifery is brought, and, for that matter, this whole business of philosophical conversation, for to set about overhauling and testing one another's notions and opinions when those of each and every one are

right, is a tedious and monstrous display of folly, if the Truth of Protagoras is really truthful and not amusing herself with oracles delivered from the unapproachable shrine of his book" (161e).

The culmination of Socrates' investigation into Protagoras's theory involves enumerating certain principles and doctrines not casually or routinely taught in public by that philosopher. In Socrates' view, Protagoras does not fully reveal the premises of his argument to his students, at least not indiscriminately. Socrates' characterization of Protagoras as possessing a secret doctrine, a more complicated defense of his "every man the measure" theory, has disappointed some scholars, who regard the very suggestion as ludicrous. Cornford is prominent among these thinkers. "The suggestion that Protagoras taught this doctrine as a 'secret doctrine' to his pupils would deceive no one," Cornford writes. "Protagoras had no school; anyone could attend his lectures and read his books."[12]

However, not everyone could attend Protagoras's lectures. Protagoras taught for a fee. Moreover, Cornford makes it sound as if an esoteric philosopher had never appeared in Elea or anywhere else. Parmenides divided his poem itself into two separate doctrines, one of which, "deceitful," is intended wholly as a device for managing public opinion. The doctrine that Parmenides' goddess reserves for her chosen pupils, "the way of truth," is also far from forthcoming about its deeper premises.

In the flux doctrine that Plato ascribes to Protagoras, both the percipient and that which is perceived cease to have an independent status. The percipient can only know about his or her own existence insofar as he or she is engaged in perception, and the objects that are perceived are similarly not any better than potential being, unless and until they are being perceived by someone. These two, the percipient and the object perceived, are discussed by Socrates as agent and patient. The percipient is the patient, or passive party. The object of perception is the agent. Together, when agent moves patient, perception results. The object of perception, however, cannot be discussed as separate from the percipient. The object itself only has the status of being when it is functioning as an agent in a patient.

Plato's Socrates describes the flux doctrine as follows. "The others, into whose secrets I am going to initiate you, are much more refined and subtle. Their first principle, on which all that we said just now depends, is that the universe really is motion and nothing else. And there are two kinds of motion. Of each kind there are any number of instances, but they differ in that the one kind has the power of acting, the other of being acted upon. From the intercourse and friction of these with one another arise offspring, endless in number, but in pairs of twins. One of each pair is always something perceived, the other a perception, whose birth always coincides with that of the thing perceived" (156ab).

The objects perceived, in accordance with this doctrine, don't have any existence outside of the combination of agent and patient. The object exists for that percipient, during the period of time when the perception is being had, but aside from this, there is nothing to speak of according to Protagoras and his associates. Plato uses the example of seeing to nail the point:

> As soon, then, as an eye and something else whose structure is adjusted to the eye come within range and give birth to the whiteness together with its cognate perception—things that would never have come into existence if either of the two had approached anything else—then it is that, as the vision from the eyes and the whiteness from the thing that joins in giving birth to the color pass in the space in between, the eye becomes filled with vision and now sees, and becomes, not vision, but a seeing eye, while the other parent of the color is saturated with whiteness and becomes, on its side, not whiteness, but a white thing, be it stock or stone or whatever else may chance to be so colored. (156de)

Clearly, Socrates has taken immense pains to unfold Protagoras's doctrine. This flux doctrine is the most searching philosophical analysis that takes place during the first part of the *Theaetetus*. The flux doctrine is the deeper foundation of the Protagorean philosophy, according to Socrates, and it is this particular doctrine that he proceeds to refute. It is not possible, in Socrates' view, for those who hold that everything is always in every kind of motion, to so much as utter a coherent statement. And the standard Socrates wields for evaluating the capacity of the flux doctrine to meaningfully speak is none other than the profession of ignorance.

"Now it seems that what has in fact come to light is that, if all things are in change, any answer that can be given to any question is equally right; you may say it is so and it is not so—or 'becomes,' if you prefer to avoid any term that would bring these people to a standstill" (183a). "Except, Theodorus, that I used the words 'so' and 'not so,' whereas we have no right to use this word 'so'—what is 'so' would cease to be in change—nor yet 'not so'; there is no change in that either. Some new dialect will have to be instituted for the exponents of this theory, since, as it is, they have no phrases to fit their fundamental proposition—unless it were 'not even nohow': that might be an expression indefinite enough to suit them" (183b).

Cornford interprets the above statements from Plato's texts as follows. The flux doctrine only applies to the knowledge we think we have of perceptible objects, according to Cornford. But the flux doctrine is limited by Plato, he thinks; the forms, and our ability to know the forms, are not in any way dependent on perception. In fact, to Cornford, while our perceptions will disclose only chaotic motions to us, we can reach for the forms as if this knowledge is not itself dependent upon the familiarity with images vouchsafed by perception. "The upshot of this section is that Plato has disentangled the application of the flux doctrine to sensible things, which he accepts, from

the unrestricted assertion, 'all things whatsoever are in change,' which he rejects. The conclusion would be more obvious, if it were not his plan to exclude mention of the forms—the things which are not in change and can be known."[13]

Cornford claims that the argument in the *Theaetetus* is designed to make the reader feel the glaring need for the absent forms. Cornford says:

> No one would take seriously the suggestion that this very advanced theory of the nature of perception and its objects was really taught in secret by any of the distinguished philosophers and poets. Socrates is, in fact, himself in the act of constructing it by a dialectical combination of elements borrowed, with important modifications and restrictions, from Protagoras and Heraclitus. Jackson pointed out that the theory is not refuted in the sequel, but on the contrary is taken as a true account of the matter, and that it is repeated elsewhere in Plato's writings.[14] There is a conclusive argument (not urged by Jackson) in favor of this inference. Plato intends to refute the claim of perception (in spite of its infallibility) to be knowledge on the ground that its objects have no real being, but are always becoming and changing and therefore cannot be known. For that purpose he is bound to give us what he believes to be a true account of the nature of those objects. It would be futile to prove that some other individual or school, perhaps wrongly, supposed to be the nature of perception was inconsistent with its claim to yield knowledge. Accordingly he states his own doctrine and takes it as established for the purposes of the whole subsequent criticism of perception. To preserve the dramatic proprieties of dialogue, he uses the transparent device of making Socrates state it as a secret doctrine of a whole succession of wise men who had notoriously never taught anything of the kind. . . . Assured that the theory must be Plato's own, we must now look at it more closely. (49)[15]

Cornford appeals to the text of Jackson as he claims that Plato never refutes the flux doctrine, or that there is no other doctrine of perception offered in the *Theaetetus*. Both of these claims are false, as we shall prove. But Cornford's arguments about the *Theaetetus* have long been the object of some stiff scholarly rebukes. Robinson, Runciman, and Taylor all oppose Cornford's interpretation of the *Theaetetus*, and reject his claim that Plato secretly espoused the flux doctrine.[16] This has not prevented a still larger number of scholars from adopting Cornford's view, as enumerated above.

In the view that Jackson proffers to us, and this is the view that Cornford essentially accepts, the flux doctrine is rather the effective cause of Plato's theory of forms. Only if we all become persuaded that the sensible world is unknowable, and dominated by flux, will we begin to feel the glaring absence of the theory of the forms. So Cornford argues, following Jackson's cue. "The purpose of the dialogue is to examine and reject this claim of the sense-world to furnish anything that Plato will call 'knowledge.' The forms are excluded in order that we may see how we can get on without them; and the negative conclusion of the whole discussion means that, as Plato had

taught ever since the discovery of the forms, without them there is no knowledge at all."[17]

JUDGMENT AND THE WAX BLOCK

The *Theaetetus* is a dialogue cast very much in the mold of the early Platonic writings. The focus of the *Theaetetus* is a single character: "knowledge." In the very early going, Socrates asks Theaetetus his famous question: "what is knowledge?" "I cannot make out to my own satisfaction what knowledge is. Can we answer that question?" (146a). This initiates the profession of ignorance as the starting point, which the midwife analogy reinforces as we have seen. Theaetetus, rather like Laches in the dialogue about courage, or Euthyphro, in the dialogue about holiness, begins to make a list of instances of the form's image. "Then I think the things one can learn from Theodorus are knowledge—geometry and all the sciences you mentioned just now, and then there are the crafts of the cobbler and other workmen. Each and all of these things are knowledge and nothing else" (146d).

Socrates corrects Theaetetus. He is not asking for a list of brave actions and speeches, nor for an enumeration of many holy attitudes and deeds. What Socrates wants is knowledge of "the thing itself": "But the question you were asked, Theaetetus, was not, what are the objects of knowledge, nor yet how many sorts of knowledge there are. We did not want to count them, but to find out what the thing itself—knowledge—is" (146e).

We wish to make clear the point to which the defeat of Protagoras's argument has brought us in the dialogue: When Socrates dismisses Protagoras from the arena at 183b, it is only at this point that the role of judgment is brought into view by Plato. In fact, from 183b until 195c, Plato's Socrates is setting forth his own theory of perceptual judgment, his own theory of the epistemological status of ordinary opinion. At *Theaetetus* 183b, Socrates begins to unfold his theory of judgment. With the motion theory defeated, Plato undertakes to prove the existence of the mind, a "unity of consciousness" as Myles Burnyeat says.[18] In this proof, the existence of the mind as something separate from, but not divorced from, the sense organs is established.

Socrates asks Theaetetus whether or not it is possible for him to think, at the same time, of a visual image and a sound image. He establishes, in his talk with Theaetetus, that the visual image can only be obtained through the eyes and no other sense faculty, and that sounds can only be obtained with the ears and no other sense faculty. Yet by virtue of what bodily organ is it, that we can contemplate, at the same time, the difference between a visual image and a sound? We can, and effortlessly do this all the time, but to call

our attention to it is to call our attention to the proof of the existence of the mind as distinct from the sense organs, another major disproof of the idea of knowledge as perception on the Protagorean model (185a).

Plato presents some marvelous imagery here. It would be ridiculous, Plato says, to suggest that our senses are like soldiers in a Trojan horse, all separate and fragmented. Plato takes pains, and admits as much, to point out to Theaetetus that it is not correct to say that we perceive with our senses; rather, we perceive through our senses. "Yet it would surely be strange that there should be a number of senses ensconced inside us, like the warriors in the Trojan horse, and all these things should not converge and meet in some single nature—a mind, or whatever it is to be called—*with* which we perceive all the objects of perception *through* the senses as instruments" (184d; the emphasis is Plato's).

In the wax block theory, Plato makes his case as to what we may say the ordinary opinions know *infallibly*. The wax block model offers a framework where "mistake is impossible" (192a). The wax block establishes a principle of the judgment and knowledge that ordinary opinion is not only capable of, but indeed is incapable of not having. This argument puts the foundations under the "images" and "likenesses," which occupy the second tier of the lower half of the divided line in the famous passage from the *Republic* (509e–510a). A sort of judgment is involved, a sort of knowledge is involved, but it trades in images, in recognition, not in dialectical reasoning.

It is a notable aspect of the dialogue, that no discussion of judgment has been offered up till this point. At 183b, Socrates pointedly observes to Theodorus that "we are quit of your old friend," and only then does he move on to discuss the issue of judgment. Jackson, however, neglects this point of transition in the dialogue. Instead, Jackson undertakes to blend the flux doctrine with the theory of judgment that Socrates unfolds only after the flux doctrine has been dispensed with.[19] For Socrates, and the theory of judgment that he introduces at 184, and into the crucial wax block passage, the flux doctrine is no longer in play. It has been defeated. Jackson, however, annexes the theory of judgment to the flux doctrine, in fact insisting that the flux doctrine drives the reader, almost in desperation as it were, to retreat to a theory of forms which no longer have a place or "immanence" in the perishable bodies we perceive.

This is very important. Because, while the question of the dialogue is "what is knowledge?" the answer which the dialogue sets out to examine is "knowledge is perception." As we indicated at the outset of this chapter, scientific knowledge, for Plato, must move beyond images. It does so by hypothesizing the existence of a single form as existing by itself—separate from the bodies in which its copies and likenesses are enmattered. Scientific knowledge alone employs intellect: vigorous and analytical probing of a single character, after it has been isolated by thought, and the powerful drive

to fully conquer the definition of the pattern or form in question is indicated by the highest stage of the divided line.

The point here is that scientific knowledge cannot be so much as approached without some stable base in perceptual judgment. This has always been the direction of Plato's Socrates, and his thesis of causation. Ordinary people know something when they match names to objects and qualities, and it is always a pattern that they name. We do it so effortlessly and rapidly that we do not so much as think upon it or even suspect that it is knowledge or intelligent. But it is both of these to Plato.

Something else needs to be brought into view here. The objects of the wax block are *single characters*. Ox, man, beauty, and ugliness are the examples that Socrates gives us. He also gives us Theaetetus and Theodorus as images in the wax block, and we will get to that shortly. The image, which is the essential constituent of the lower part of the divided line, and the name of the form which is defined on the upper division of the line, are the same. This tells us something about knowledge, which it is the entire purpose of the *Theaetetus* to drive home: that knowledge is of indivisible, single patterns. This is the characteristic of ordinary opinion, in the medium of images, but it is also the characteristic of the patterns defined by intellect in speech and Socratic investigation.

Theaetetus, again in the early going, begins to talk about what he has studied with the most care: mathematics. Theodorus had been his teacher. Theaetetus is talking about his investigation into square roots, and he points out that though "these square roots were evidently infinite in number, to try to arrive at a single collective term by which we could designate all these roots" was the object of his inquiry (147d). This answer pleases Socrates. It suggests to Socrates a direction for their inquiry into knowledge. "Take as a model your answer about the roots. Just as you found a single character to embrace all that multitude, so now try to find a single formula that applies to the many kinds of knowledge" (148d).

As Plato introduces the issue of judgment into the discussion about knowledge, he makes some statements about judgment which bear upon its relationship to scientific knowledge. This type of judgment, the type appropriate to dialectic (but not to recollected forms as images) is difficult and severe. "Is it not true, then, that whereas all the impressions which penetrate to the mind through the body are things which men and animals alike are naturally constituted to receive from the moment of their birth, reflections about them with respect to their existence and usefulness only come, if they come at all, with difficulty through a long and troublesome process of education" (186c). "If that is so, knowledge does not reside in the impressions, but in our reflection upon them. It is there, seemingly, and not in the impressions, that it is possible to grasp existence and truth" (186d).

The judgment detailed in the previous passages is not the judgment that is characteristic of the wax block. For the type of judgment that is operative in the wax block impressions is, as Socrates clearly indicates, *impossible to get wrong*. In the wax block, there are only two aspects, but the role of memory is one of them. There is the perception of the external object, and there is the memory, which either has or does not have a record or impression of this kind of object. If the individual in question encounters a cow, and if this person has had past experiences of cows, such that there is a healthy memorial or imprint on the wax block, then judgment simply consists in matching the perception to the proper imprint on the wax block. If there is a memorial or record of the form of object, as an *image*, in the wax block, and if the object of perception in the present moment, is within the physical power of the sense organs to perceive, then mistake is impossible. The individual will correctly identify the object as a cow.

In the wax block model, Socrates has revived a principle of knowledge which was used earlier in the dialogue during the examination of Protagoras. This principle is that it is impossible both to know something and also to not know it. Perceptual judgment, as Plato makes clear here, is of a single, indivisible object: a pattern. This is what the ordinary names are, imitations of patterns. But to know something, one must have had a prior experience of it. If one has never encountered a cow, if there is no record of a "cow" image in the wax block, then it is not possible to recognize a cow when one comes across one. If one has a memory imprint of a cow, but if one is looking at an object far in the distance, such that one cannot make out what sort of animal it is, one does not have the ability to make a correct judgment of it. If the object of immediate perception is beyond the range of the physical powers of the sensing organs, then it is not *really* possible to make a false judgment. If one hazards a guess and says that "it is a cow" without being able to perceive it due to its distance, this is not really an example of false judgment.

The *only* example that Socrates gives of an error in the wax block is just like the above discussion of the cow. Here is how Socrates defines the wax block:

> Let us call it the gift of the Muse's mother, Memory, and say that whenever we wish to remember something we see or hear or conceive in our own minds, we hold this wax under the perceptions or ideas and imprint them on it as we might stamp the impression of a seal ring. Whatever is so imprinted we remember and know so long as the image remains; whatever is rubbed out or has not succeeded in leaving an impression we have forgotten and do not know. (191d) Now take a man who knows things in this way and is attending to something that he sees or hears. Is there not here a possibility of making a false judgment? "By thinking that things he knows are other things he knows, or sometimes things he does not know. We were wrong when we agreed earlier that this was impossible." (191e)

This judgment of the wax block only takes place when one is both perceiving an object and has a memorial imprint in the wax block. If either of these is absent, then judgment is not possible. Socrates, in his investigation into false judgment, comes up with the only answer he can find in the wax block model: "It remains, then, that false judgment should occur in a case like this—when I, who know you and Theodorus and possess imprints of you both like seal impressions in the wax block, see you both at a distance indistinctly and am in a hurry to assign the proper imprint of each to the proper visual perception, like fitting a foot into its own footmark to effect a recognition, and then make the mistake of interchanging them, like a man who thrusts his feet into the wrong shoes, and apply the perception of each to the imprint of the other" (193d).

Some scholars have insisted that Plato seriously takes the above example to be a mark of failure in the wax block.[20] It is not, for the reason we have set forth, but it should help matters to refer to an earlier passage, when Socrates is advising Theaetetus about the sorts of problems that sophistic speakers will attempt to trip him into. "Yes, and you might have been reduced to the same condition by a number of further questions—whether knowing can be keen or dim, whether you can know from close at hand what you cannot know from a distance, or know the same thing with more or less intensity. A mercenary skirmisher in the war of words might lie in wait for you armed with a thousand such questions, once you have identified knowledge and perception. He would make his assaults upon hearing and smelling and such-like senses and put you to confusion, sustaining his attack until your admiration of his inestimable skill betrayed you into his toils, and thereupon, leading you captive and bound, he would hold you to ransom for such a sum as you and he might agree upon" (165e).

For the time being, it must suffice to note only a couple of things. First, when Socrates is introducing the wax block, the images he enumerates are *forms*. They are forms as *images*, but nevertheless they are forms. "Now search your memory and see if you have ever said to yourself, 'certainly, what is beautiful is ugly,' or 'what is unjust is just.' To put it generally, consider if you have ever set about convincing yourself that any one thing is certainly another thing, or whether on the contrary, you have never, even in a dream, gone so far as to say to yourself that odd numbers must be even, or anything of the sort" (190b). "Do you suppose anyone else, mad or sane, ever goes so far as to talk himself over, in his own mind, into stating seriously that an ox must be a horse or that two must be one?" (190c). The errors which are enumerated, for the wax block model, are not of forms, they are between particular instances of a *single* form: Socrates in the distance, Theaetetus and Theodorus in the distance.

The memory imprint of Theodorus and Theaetetus and Socrates in a person's wax block are, as all images must be, particulars. When Laches is

asked for an example of courage, he talks about the soldiers he has seen stand fast against the approaching enemy (190e); Socrates himself talks about ill people he has seen who faced the surgeon's knife (191d). The images are the impressions or likenesses of the forms in perishable objects. The soul, the wax block soul, will never confuse a man with an ox. It will furthermore have, in its image records of men, specific men, just as Laches no doubt had specific soldiers in mind. This is why science cannot emerge until the images have been overcome. The images cannot be overcome until they are isolated as separate objects for intellect. And they cannot be isolated as separate objects for intellect without a direct hypothesis, from wax block imprint to the hypothesis of the form as a separately existing object for the intellect.

Socrates returns to the wax block in the closing pages of the *Theaetetus*. Here he makes it clear that the image in the wax block, even though the object recognized is a universal (as image), is still attached to the specifics of the object perceived. Memory preserves the mixture, even as judgment singles out the form as the original method by which recognition is performed. If the wax block already had images of distilled forms, then, upon seeing Theaetetus, how would Socrates be able to tell him apart from any other man?

Socrates recurs to the wax block, and this showcases the famous Socratic humor, as he invokes another argument that they have been contemplating. That argument is, that an object, a single object, can only be known if we are able to identify a distinguishing mark which separates that particular object from all others. "Really, Theaetetus, now I come to look at this statement at close quarters, it is like a scene painting. I cannot make it out at all, though, as long as I kept at a distance, there seemed to be some sense in it" (208e).

Socrates takes up the issue of how he can know Theaetetus himself. Does he need some mark whereby he can separate Theaetetus from everyone else, in order to be able to say that he knows him or recognizes him? In order for this to be true, the image in the wax block could be of nothing more than generic man. But that is absurd. "But look here! If that was so, how could I possibly be having a notion of you rather than of anyone else? Suppose I was thinking, Theaetetus is one who is a man and has a nose and eyes and a mouth and so forth, enumerating every part of the body. Will thinking in that way result in my thinking of Theaetetus rather than of Theodorus, or, as they say, of the man in the street?" (209b). "Well, now suppose I think not merely of a man with a nose and eyes, but of one with a snub nose and prominent eyes. Once more shall I be having a notion of you any more than of myself or anyone else of that description?" (209c). "In fact, there will be no notion of Theaetetus in my mind, I suppose, until this particular snubness has stamped and registered within me a record distinct from all the other cases of snubness that I have seen, and so with every other part of you" (209cd).

THE AVIARY

As soon as Socrates has fully established the parameters of the wax block model of knowledge, the direction of the argument undergoes a distinct change. From the moment when Socrates remarks to Theaetetus that he feels irritated with himself for seeming to be satisfied with the doctrine he has established, he has commenced to defend the wax block against the challenges that will be made against it. The aviary, the jury, the Dream, and the several theories about knowledge plus an account are all challenges that Socrates' wax block model of perceptual knowledge must meet, and overcome, if his argument is to succeed.

Socrates tells Theaetetus that he feels "disgust" at "my own stupidity." "I am not merely disgusted but anxious about the answer I shall make if someone asks, So, Socrates, you have made a discovery—that false judgment resides, not in our perceptions among themselves nor yet in our thoughts, but in the fitting together of perception and thought?" (195d). This, expressly the wax block model, is not something that Socrates can find fault with. So he continues, to anticipate what the criticisms will be. "On the other hand, he will continue, you also say that we can never imagine that a man whom we merely think of and do not see is a horse which again we do not see or touch but merely think of without perceiving it in any way? . . . On that showing, he will say, a man could never imagine that eleven, which he merely thinks of, is twelve, which again he merely thinks of" (195e).

Socrates does insist, in his wax block model, that it is not possible for any of us to confuse one memorial seal in the block with any other memorial seal. The aviary represents a challenge to this part of the wax block argument. We do not, Socrates allows, confuse our memorial record of a man with our memorial record of a horse. But do we ever confuse our memorial seal of the number "eleven" with the memorial seal of the number "twelve"?

The representation of the mind as an "Aviary" could hardly be more different than the wax block model. In the wax block, we have impressions cast in a material that is quite likely to preserve them. In the Aviary, the constituents of the mind are birds, creatures which might leap into flight when our mind attempts to grasp them. The birds in the Aviary can only be gotten hold of with some degree of labor. This is unlike the wax block model, where memory functions so effortlessly as to barely register in our consciousness as any effort at all.

There are commentators on the *Theaetetus* who refuse to concede that there is some intelligence and even knowledge involved in the ordinary person's effortless ability to assign a name to a perishable object. These commentators are entitled to their view, as we are entitled to probe the merits of said views. Yet the point needs to be made that Plato certainly regards the

ordinary assignment of name to object as intelligent action. This is proved not only in the *Cratylus*, but in the foundation of the divided line in the *Republic*. The great hypothesis which allows Plato to contemplate the form as an isolated object, is dependent on the form-as-image with which it begins.

Plato knows full well that some of his interlocutors will attempt to unseat his wax block model of perception. Plato, never one to build houses on flimsy foundations, would himself prefer to find the weaknesses, if any there are, before resting his mind on the subject. With the introduction of the example of the aviary, we have constituents of the mind which are unlike wax block impressions of the forms. The Aviary birds represent *functions* of thought, rather than recorded memories of forms.

> Now consider whether knowledge is a thing you can possess in that way without having it about you, like a man who has caught some wild birds—pigeons or what not—and keeps them in an aviary he has made for them at home. In a sense, of course, we might say he "has" them all the time inasmuch as he possesses them, mightn't we? . . . But in another sense he "has" none of them, though he has got control of them, now that he has made them captive in an enclosure of his own; he can take and have hold of them whenever he likes by catching any bird he chooses, and let them go again, and it is open to him to do that as often as he pleases. (197de)

During the Aviary discussion, Socrates is instructing Theaetetus that interlocutors are going to "turn and twist" the expressions "knowing" and "learning." The wax block model has set forth its criteria for perceptual knowing: the memorial record, and the perception of a present object matched to a memorial seal in the block. The numbers "eleven" and "twelve," taken just as wax block seals, ought not even possibly be confused the one for the other, by anybody, according to Socrates' argument. How about if someone asks a person what is the sum of seven and five? Does it never happen that a person sums the numbers together incorrectly, and matches the sum of "seven plus five" with the number eleven instead of twelve? If this happens, if a person is capable of stating that seven plus five is equal to "eleven," does this not mean that the principle of the wax block is overthrown?

The principle of the wax block, we can recall, was that it is not possible both to know something and not to know it. Now if we have "twelve" in our memorial seal, in accordance with the wax block model, we know this. But when someone is asked "what is the sum of seven plus five," and answers "eleven," incorrectly, does this not mean that the person both does, and does not, have the knowledge of "twelve"? This is the challenge that the aviary illustrates.

Most scholars have immediately focused on the fact that there does not appear to be any "seven-plus-five" bird in the aviary. They are correct: there is no seven-plus-five bird. Cornford thinks that there should be one. "The

expression covers objects (such as numbers) that I am acquainted with, as well as truths that I have been taught. All these are in my aviary. Does it also include a complex object such as 'the sum of seven plus five'? This ought to be included."[21] Frank Lewis, for his part, believes that a person who sums "seven plus five" to equal "elven" has demonstrated that he cannot distinguish between eleven and twelve, that he confuses one for the other, which again would upset the wax block model. "So in the case of the man who believes that 5 and 7 are 11, the number 11 appears in his belief where 12 should have appeared, so that in some senses he may also be said to believe that 11 is 12."[22]

Burnyeat makes a fuss over the person who has added "seven plus five" incorrectly. This person is a "dunce," Burnyeat states.[23] But in fact, the aviary is not effectively about the person who adds together two numbers wrongly. It applies equally to the mathematician, who adds together the two numbers "seven" and "five" *correctly*. In both cases, the principle that one cannot both know and not know the same thing will be upset, but not correctly or legitimately, in Socrates' view. Because the wax block deals in images, and as the "wild birds" fluttering about in the aviary convey, questions of mathematical operations cannot be fit into the wax block model, no matter how well a person can do his numbers.

The person who mistakes "seven plus five" for "eleven" obviously shows one example of how an operation is involved. The point of the aviary is not to highlight a poorly educated student. When the example of the mathematician is included, it illustrates that the mathematician also must perform some operation in his mind when he is given the numbers to sum, and that in the interim, the knowledge of twelve would be something that he both has and does not have. For he needs to perform the mathematical operation in order to "recover" his knowledge of twelve.

Burnyeat has correctly pointed out that Socrates is calling to our attention that the mathematical question involves a kind of knowledge which we may, in a way, have, but not at the moment possess. Mathematical knowledge is like that, for even if we know the number twelve, we do not "possess" the knowledge that seven plus five is equal to twelve until we apply our mathematical knowledge:

> The finished mathematician knows all numbers, doesn't he? There is no number the knowledge of which is not in his mind. . . . And such a person may sometimes count either the numbers themselves in his own head or some set of external things that have a number. . . . And by counting we shall mean simply trying to find out what some particular number amounts to? . . . It appears, then, that the man who, as we admitted, knows every number, is trying to find out what he knows as if he had no knowledge of it. . . . Well, our illustration from hunting pigeons and getting possession of them will enable us to explain that the hunting occurs in two ways—first, before you possess your pigeon in order to have possession of it; secondly, after

> getting possession of it, in order to catch and hold in our hand what you have already possessed for some time. In the same way, if you have long possessed pieces of knowledge about things you have learned and know, it is still possible to get to know the same things again, by the process of recovering the knowledge of some particular thing and getting hold of it. (198d)

There is another reason why there is no "seven plus five" bird in the aviary. We will take this up momentarily. But it is the express purpose of the aviary discussion to deal with certain kinds of knowledge that, by their nature, require some application before the knowledge becomes active. This is not the knowledge of the wax block. Socrates wants to address this point in order to make it clear that this challenge does not upset his wax block in the least. The wax block does not deal with forms of knowledge that require applications and operations. "Shall we say then, that we care nothing about words, and if it amuses anyone to turn and twist the expressions 'knowing' and 'learning'? Having drawn a distinction between possessing knowledge and having it about one, we agree that it is impossible not to possess what one does possess, and so we avoid the result that a man should not know what he does know, but we say that it is possible for him to get hold of a false judgment about it" (199a).

SOCRATES' DREAM

Scholars of the *Theaetetus* have, since the work of Wittgenstein[24] and Ryle,[25] found a new home in the Dream theory. Wittgenstein's own philosophy is anchored in a type of atomism that is entirely in line with the pluralist philosophies which emerged in the shadow of Parmenides' argument. "Objects are what is unalterable and subsistent; their configuration is what is changing and unstable" (2.0271). "Objects, the unalterable, and the subsistent are one and the same" (2.027). "Objects can only be named" (3.221).[26]

For Plato, the name "cow," when assigned to an object, certainly involves knowledge. It can be known what a cow is. In this dialogue, the *Theaetetus*, knowledge is the subject matter. The critique that Plato applies to Parmenides' theory of partless body can just as easily be applied to any form of atomism. The movement in Plato scholarship to claim the Dream theory as *Socrates'* predilection, therefore, does not have much evidence to recommend it.

In the Dream theory, for which Socrates overtly expresses disdain, the following premises are advanced: that any object that we can know must be a *complex* composed of parts; that indivisible objects are not knowable; that we may not so much as speak a coherent sentence about an indivisible object, but that the whole of parts is the "atom" of knowledge. These doctrines are

repeatedly disproved by Plato in the *Theaetetus*, but with a big push from Ryle and his colleagues, the Dream theory has nevertheless been ascribed to Plato with considerable gusto.

"Cow," like "beauty," "man," "horse," is a single and indivisible image in the wax block, and it does not acquire parts when it is taken separately for definition on the highest level of the *Republic*'s divided line. Why does the definition *not* have parts? Scholars frequently insist that, since Plato must use many names in addition to that of the form in question to achieve a definition, that the form must of course have parts. What would be Plato's response? He would remind us of how we reached the isolated form in the first place: namely, by hypothesizing its existence. If we hypothesize the existence of a single form separately, and we begin to convert the image into spoken or written definitions, the subject would remain the single, indivisible form.

In the Dream theory, the simple objects of perception cannot be objects of knowledge. They can only be "named." Ryle imputes this doctrine to Plato. "In contrast with the internal complexity of statements, the pieces of statements are simple, unanalyzable linguistic atoms or names. . . . So a sentence, being built out of two or more words, signifies apparently some sort of complex or molecule of the atomic objects named by these words. . . . These simple, nameable objects cannot, as I said, be what anyone believes, disbelieves, knows (savoir) or does not know; or what he forgets, discovers, or is taught, or teaches." The destiny for these "linguistic atoms," according to Ryle, is Russell's doctrine of acquaintance. "In Russell's lingo, we can be acquainted with these simple nameables."[27]

In the Dream, all complexes reduce to elements, but the elements can only be named and not themselves taken as objects of knowledge. "I seem to have heard some people say that what might be called the first elements of which we and all other things consist are such that no account can be given of them. Each of them just by itself can only be named; we cannot attribute to it anything further or say that it exists or does not exist, for we should at once be attaching to it existence or non-existence, whereas we ought to add nothing if we are to express just it alone" (202a). "But in fact there is no formula in which any element can be expressed; it can only be named, for a name is all there is that belongs to it. But when we come to things composed of these elements, then, just as these things are complex, so the names are combined to make a description, a description precisely being a combination of nameables" (202b).

Plato, in his argument, refuses to allow that the number six has parts. Ryle, when he picks up the example from the Aviary, insists that "twelve" is not something that can be known, it is only something that can be "named." "Seven plus five" can be known to Ryle. But the indivisible single form cannot. "The sentence '7 plus 5 makes 12' tells a truth and so tells something

which a person might know or truly believe or truly guess. Correspondingly it tells something that a person might be taught or find out for himself; something that he might forget, after having once known it; something of which he might be ignorant; and so on. In opposition to such a completed sentence, an atomic expression like '7' or '12' or 'Theaetetus' could not tell a truth or falsehood, and could not therefore tell what someone believes or guesses, whether rightly or wrongly; or tell what someone has taught or discovered; or tell what someone has forgotten after once having known it; or tell what someone might be ignorant of, or lastly, tell what he might know."[28]

Ryle insists that we must make a proposition in order to truly say something. That is, we must combine words in order to speak at all. Yet, let us not be so hasty, as Ryle attempts to disenfranchise the wax block images from the domain of the knowable on the basis of this argument that a statement must have parts.

Did not Plato's Socrates himself bring Parmenides' entire argument down on just such an insight? Did not Plato's Socrates compel Parmenides (*Parmenides* 142a) to admit that he could not so much as utter a coherent statement or any sound at all, unless he admitted that his "one" has "being" added to it?[29] Yet in Plato's philosophy, language itself is not the object to be known. The fact that we cannot speak a coherent utterance without parts does not therefore mean to Plato that we are unable to take for our object a single indivisible one.

What is proved, when Parmenides confesses that he must allow that his "one" has "existence," is that the original *objects* of speech are themselves wholes of parts: that is, perishable bodies. It is from that insight that the entire refutation of the Eleatic thesis takes place in the second proof, as we have shown. However, and this is carefully and consistently emphasized in the *Parmenides*: the forms which are in the perishable body, even when one form is in several of the infinite parts of the perishable body, always remain identical. "What I mean is this. When you use any word, you use it to stand for something. You can use it once or many times, but in either case you are speaking of the thing whose name it is. However many times you utter the same word, you must always mean the same thing" (147d). "But Parmenides, the best I can make of the matter is this—that these forms are as it were patterns fixed in the nature of things. The other things are made in their image and are likenesses, and this participation they come to have in the forms is nothing but their being made in their image" (132d).

Plato's Socrates, while he insists that we must speak of a perishable body or whole of parts in order to speak coherently at all, initially, is not thereby indicating that his statement itself is the real object. For the formal logicians, the proposition can simply refer to itself. Plato's Socrates, however, is still able to talk about the forms singly, indeed about "six" and "twelve."

Socrates, when he talks about the Dream theory and its complex objects, with its unknowable elements, insists that it is nonsensical. "If anyone tells us that the complex is by its nature knowable, while the element is unknowable, we shall suppose that, whether he intends it or not, he is playing with us" (206b). Socrates goes through a number of examples, including the alphabet and scales of musical notes. Socrates argues that "is not a whole exactly the same thing—that from which nothing whatever is missing? Whereas, when something is removed, the thing becomes neither a whole nor a sum; it changes at the same moment from being both to being neither" (205a).

In the *Parmenides*, the characters of "whole" and "part" are the very first irresistible characters of an object to be proved, after it has been proved that unity and being are the original co-equal characters of any object that we can refer to without the help of an hypothesis. It is not Plato's belief, either, that a whole is nothing other than the "sum of its parts." The whole does exist as a container, and the parts that it contains, as demonstrated in the second hypothesis of the *Parmenides*, are indeed infinite in number, and yet the whole also exists as that *which is contained*. As a whole that must exist in a place and in time, the whole has, not infinite parts, but extremities. The whole qua whole, since it must have extremities *to be* a whole, must have the parts of coming into being and passing away.

The atoms of Democritus, which Wittgenstein's "objects" so closely resemble, are nothing more than little versions of Parmenides' ungenerated unity. Plato has proved that an object which has one part cannot avoid having all the parts: including the parts of being a "whole," having extremities, and thus coming into being and passing away. It is for this reason that no bodies can be, truly speaking, objects of knowledge. For the constitution of a body, in terms of its infinite parts, necessarily thwarts the limit which an object must possess in order to be knowable.

The third, sixth, and seventh movements of the *Parmenides* trace Plato's extension of the Eleatic critique to the atomisms of Empedocles and Anaxagoras, and by implication to those of Democritus. We cannot proceed in more detail with that analysis here, but the point needs at least to be made in the current context. It is not Plato's view that the enterprise of knowledge can be rescued, or needs to be rescued, by propping up the whole-of-parts theory of knowledge. Forms *in* the parts are knowable, but these forms are not divisible. Just as Plato proves that each and every one of the infinite parts in the body of the second hypothesis must possess the co-equal natures of unity and being, these characters of unity and being remain the same as themselves each time they are enumerated afresh. "Elements," that is, parts of wholes, are not the object of knowledge in Plato's view.

A number of scholars, including Gail Fine, Julia Annas, and Burnyeat insist that the whole of parts model can be reconciled with knowledge.[30]

These scholars make the argument that, in order to save the enterprise of knowledge, we must argue that the elements are knowable. None of these thinkers have quite got Plato's point, however, that what *is* divisible is *infinitely* divisible.

Plato, when he introduces the number "six" as a form and treats it as a whole of parts, revives the issue of the aviary and the missing "seven plus five" bird. Burnyeat is particularly engaged here, when Plato denies that six can be equated with a whole of parts.[31] This is because Burnyeat, along with Annas and Fine, mistakenly believes that there is such a thing as an irreducible *part*. In Plato's *Parmenides*, forms are *in* the parts, but they are not *themselves* divisible.

Socrates slices and dices up the number "six" in several ways. "Well now, is there any difference between the sum and all the things it includes? For instance, when we say 'one, two, three, four, five, six,' or 'twice three,' or 'three times two,' or 'four and two' or 'three and two and one,' are we in all these cases expressing the same thing or different things?" (204c). Socrates asks Theaetetus if all of these examples are not in fact instances of six, the sum of six, and certainly, they all are. But not in the same way. "One, two, three, four, five, six," summed together, adds up to twenty-one. Which would mean that six and twenty-one are sometimes equal.

The Dream theory is modeled on the letters, the elements of writing, and syllables. It would appear, to a great many commentators, that the letters are the irreducible atoms of this model. Are they? Clearly not to Ryle. For Ryle, each letter has a "name," and this name is phonetic. The letter "w," for instance, has the following parts for Ryle: "The word 'Double-u' is a trisyllabic name of a letter which is not itself a trisyllable or even a monosyllable."[32] Or we can take another example from that resourceful combatant in the Protagorean lines: "For example, to take the three letters of the English monosyllabic word 'box,' is Plato thinking only or primarily of the three characters written left to right, of which the second is nearly circular and the third consists of two straight lines cutting one another at something less than a right angle?"[33]

Wholes of parts are unknowable because that which has parts has infinite parts. Every time the enumeration of the parts changes, so does the sum of the whole. For this reason, on the lower end of the divided line in *Republic* 6, there is the separate sector for the "images" and "likenesses." They are, as such, unlike the perishable bodies whose images they are, indivisible. How many parts do you think we could come up with for the wagon (207c)? Manmade objects have a place in the lower division of the divided line, and the images that they give off are indeed forms in Plato's view, just the kind of thing that would be in our wax block memorial.

THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE WAX BLOCK MODEL

It is not uncommon to hear scholars refer to Plato's wax block model of perceptual knowledge as, in political terms, suspect. This is to say, that it is not uncommon to hear a scholar remark that the suggestion that the human mind is like a wax block is tantamount to indicating that the human mind is infinitely pliable, and thus ripe for the machinations of unscrupulous politicians. In the point of view imbedded in such a claim, the indication is that the very wax block account of image-based, original knowledge itself is politically charged, predisposed to authoritarian manipulations and the like.

For this reason, it should replay our efforts to spend some time considering exactly how Plato intends for us to regard the wax block theory of mind. In fact, the wax block is consecrated by Plato to the "mother of the muses," memory. As such, it is a natural conduit to that which Plato denominates "instruction." Instruction sorts well and directly with the midwife model of education, which is Plato's characterization of Socrates' method. For the midwife cannot simply implant ideas into the heads of his students, prior to embarking upon an examination of said ideas. Rather, the ideas must already be in the minds of the students, and as such, as correct opinions about common objects, these views are amenable to critical analysis and reflection.

This is not the only model of knowledge that is showcased during the *Theaetetus*. In fact, every other model of knowledge that is investigated in this dialogue is revealed to be either seriously flawed, or downright disingenuous. When it comes time to establish a reference point for the education based upon "conviction," Plato brings before our eyes the members of a jury, and their "educator," the attorney or orator.

We should recur to the fundamental principle that has guided the entire discussion in the *Theaetetus* and its investigation into the nature of knowledge, ever since the defeat of Protagoras's argument and the introduction of the principle of judgment as the criteria for the inquiry. The operative principle is that it is not possible for a person both to possess knowledge and not to possess knowledge on the same subject, at the same time, and in the same respect. In the wax block model, the assignment of perceptual image to the corresponding wax block memorial is all but instantaneous, but in the aviary, in the Dream, and in the other models of knowledge on display, what is alleged to be known is discovered to involve a countervailing ignorance.

The case of the jury is the most dramatic example, wherein it is possible for a jury to arrive at a "correct decision," that is, to deliver a correct verdict, based upon, not knowledge, but ignorance. For, in the situation of the jury member, the facts upon which a verdict must be delivered are not directly witnessed. The jury member must rely upon hearsay to obtain information about the relevant facts, and more important, the jury is at the mercy of the

lawyer-orator, whose determination to implant beliefs in the souls of the jury, is what Plato refers to as the educational model based on "conviction," as opposed to the wax block model that is based on instruction.

"You will find a whole profession to prove that true belief is not knowledge. . . . The profession of those paragons of intellect known as orators and lawyers. There you have men who use their skill to produce conviction, not by instruction, but by making people believe whatever they want them to believe" (201ab). "And when a jury is rightly convinced of facts which can be known only by an eyewitness, then, judging by hearsay and accepting a true belief, they are judging without knowledge, although, if they find the right verdict, their conviction is correct? . . . But if true belief and knowledge were the same thing, the best of jurymen could never have a correct belief without knowledge" (201c).

The attorney is determined to prevail. It is no secret that the movement of sophist education in Athens was focused on the law courts. For this was the great avenue for ambitious families to aspire to positions of eminence and greater power in the city. Protagoras, Prodicus, and Gorgias promised to pour virtue into their students, that is, to deliver into their souls that which previously had not been there. In Plato's view, it is this education in terms of implanted conviction which is the politically toxic category.

The wax block model does not indicate or suggest that people's souls are thus impressionable. For it is not the deliverance of opinions into the soul that the wax block is designed to illustrate. In the example of the jury, the people are more or less at the mercy of the lawyer-orators: even a correct opinion has decisive accidental qualities. The potential for incorrect judgments is wide and notorious. In the wax block model by contrast, provided that the individual has had experience of the kind of object in question, Plato does not believe that mistake is even *possible*. The passions and the arts of persuasion are not in play *at all* in the wax block model.

The wax block model of perceptual knowledge is unveiled, not by the implanting of conviction, but by the profession of ignorance itself: for the assignment of name to object—that effortless, intelligent operation that all and sundry perform in virtually every moment of their waking lives—is something so natural and spontaneous for human beings to accomplish that they do not notice that this is a knowledge which they possess. This is the entire point of the profession of ignorance: for the profession of ignorance enables the skillful questioner to reveal to the interlocutor, a knowledge that is already within her, as opposed to some foundationless importation of conviction based upon the machinations of the would-be educator.

In the latter parts of the *Theaetetus*, Plato is investigating a definition of knowledge that is at least superficially attractive. Knowledge, in this proposed model, involves a true belief "plus an account" of the object known. The subject matter, however, is still the perishable objects. The perishable

objects themselves are known through recognition, that is, through perception and memory. There is no scientific knowledge possible for perishable objects individually, in Plato's view. Science can only begin when an indivisible and isolated object, the form itself, is converted into the focus for intellect.

For the subject matter of these late discussions of a "true belief plus an account" is still the single perishable objects. The perishable objects are the objects which human beings recognize and know by virtue of the patterns which are their causes. The wax block not only illustrates this form of knowledge, but it makes clear that the image-recognition model is entirely satisfactory for the sphere of practical purposes, including the comprehension of truth of fact. Individuals do not *need* to develop a complicated enumeration of the parts of a wagon in order to establish that the wagon is a wagon. They recognize the form of a wagon (207a) in the object they behold. What additional enlightenment is to be brought about by being able to account for every single plank of wood, every screw and nail, which is discoverable in the parts of this object?

To make the ordinary speaker "prove" that the wagon is a wagon, is not a task that arises out of the needs of the ordinary speaker. It is, however, within the power of philosophic speech to encumber ordinary opiners with such laborious criteria of knowledge as to quickly bring them to silence. The sophist not only can implant false convictions as regards matters of fact, he can employ his insights to arrest the utterance of true speech, or to render the same all but useless.

Consider the very last definition of knowledge that Plato sets before us in the *Theaetetus*. In this model, in order for us to be able to say that we possess knowledge of some perishable object and what it is, we must be able to describe, in our account, some marking by virtue of which the object in question can be distinguished from every other object in the world. If we keep our wagon in view, this single perishable wagon that is before us, shall we regard ourselves as possessed of surer knowledge, if we proceed to enumerate the reasons why the wagon is not an avocado, or a tree, or a molehill?

"When we have a correct notion of the way in which certain things differ from other things, it tells us to add a correct notion of the way in which they differ from other things. On this showing, the most vicious of circles would be nothing to this injunction. It might better deserve to be called the sort of direction a blind man might give. To tell us to get hold of something we already have, in order to get to know something that we are already thinking of, suggests a state of the most absolute darkness" (209e).

What we would be illustrating in such a model is how to suppress and stifle the original intelligence operative in the ordinary assignment of name to object. There is no knowledge beyond the recognition model in the correct identification of perishable objects and the forms which are enmattered in

them. Science only begins when we isolate a form apart from perishable objects, and while we can come back down the mountain, once we have arrived at a definition of the isolated form—and thus commence to apply this achieved knowledge to the perishable objects that we encounter—this knowledge is not obtained through the implanting of convictions. It is, however, beholden to the original wax block model, the foundations of which alone, in Plato's view, make possible the ascent from opinion to science on the model of instruction. The wax block model, then, constitutes the antidote to charlatan rhetoricians, rather than their breeding ground.

NOTES

1. I will be using the translation by F. M. Cornford in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, ed. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989). All of the Platonic dialogues cited in this chapter will be from the Hamilton-Cairns volume.

2. Theodor Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers: A History of Ancient Philosophy*, vol. 1 (New York: Humanities Press, 1964), 461.

3. Francis M. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge: The Theaetetus and the Sophist* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957), 13.

4. I am using David Gallop's translation of Parmenides' fragments in this chapter. *Parmenides of Elea: A Text and Translation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991). References to Parmenides will cite the fragment number first, followed by a colon, and then the line numbers.

5. Relevant commentary on Protagoras's theory of perception can be found in G. B. Kerferd, "Plato's Account of the Relativism of Protagoras," *Durham University Journal* 42 (1949): 25. Also in David Glidden, "Protagorean Relativism and Physis," *Phronesis* 20 (1975): 223, and in Sarah Waterlow, "Protagoras and Inconsistency," *Archiv fur Geschichte der Philosophie* 59 (1977): 32.

6. Karl Reinhart, "The Relation between the Two Parts of Parmenides' Poem," in *The Pre-Socratics: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Alexander P. D. Mourelatos (New York: Anchor, 1974). Cf. Glidden, "Protagorean Relativism," 210, 225. On the similarity between Protagoras and Gorgias, see Richard Bett, "The Sophists and Relativism," *Phronesis* 34 (1989): 152–53. And also A. P. D. Mourelatos, "Gorgias on the Function of Language," *Philosophical Topics* 15 (1987): 135.

7. See G. B. Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 17.

8. Henry Jackson, "Plato's Later Theory of Ideas, IV: The *Theaetetus*," *Journal of Philology* 13 (1885): 242–72.

9. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 7.

10. Jackson, "Plato's Later Theory," 244.

11. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 6.

12. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 36.

13. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 101.

14. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 49. Plato brings up the poets' affinity for flux doctrines again in the *Cratylus* at 402bc.

15. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 49. The list of scholars who have followed Cornford's view that Plato is himself the author of the flux doctrine is considerable. We will list some prominent examples. R. Hackforth, "Platonic Forms in the *Theaetetus*," *Classical Quarterly* 7 (1957): 55; Mohan Matthen, "Perception, Relativism and Truth: Reflections on Plato's *Theaetetus* 152–60," *Dialogue* 24 (1985): 47; George Nakhnikian, "Plato's Theory of Sensa-

tion, Part 2," *Review of Metaphysics* 9 (1955/1956): 306; John Yolton, "The Ontological Status of Sense Data in Plato's Theory of Perception," *Review of Metaphysics* 3 (1949): 28, 40.

16. Richard Robinson, "Forms and Error in Plato's *Theaetetus*," *Philosophical Review* 59 (1950): 10; W. G. Runciman, *Plato's Later Epistemology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 18; A. E. Taylor, *Plato: The Man and His Work* (London: Methuen, 1955), 329.

17. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 28.

18. Myles Burnyeat, *The Theaetetus of Plato*, trans. M. J. Levett (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1990), 58.

19. Jackson, "Plato's Later Theory of Ideas," 256–58.

20. Kenneth M. Sayre, *Plato's Analytic Method* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 114.

21. Cornford, *Plato's Theory of Knowledge*, 137.

22. Frank Lewis, "Foul Play in Plato's Aviary: *Theaetetus* 195b," in *Exegesis and Argument: Studies in Greek Philosophy Presented to Gregory Vlastos*, ed. E. N. Lee, A. P. D. Mourelatos, and R. M. Rorty (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1973), 264.

23. Burnyeat, *Plato's Theaetetus*, 112.

24. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, English text of the 3rd ed, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: MacMillan, 1968), part 1: #46 and #48, pp. 21–23.

25. Gilbert Ryle, "Logical Atomism and Plato's *Theaetetus*," *Phronesis* 35 (1990): 431–51. Cf. Winifred Hicken, "The Character and Provenance of Socrates 'Dream' in the Theaetetus," *Phronesis* 3 (1958): 140. John McDowell follows Ryle and Hicken, "Identity Mistakes: Plato and the Logical Atomists," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 70 (1970): 187.

26. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuiness (London: Routledge, 2000).

27. Ryle, "Logical Atomism in the *Theaetetus*," 31.

28. Ryle, "Logical Atomism in the *Theaetetus*," 24.

29. Protagoras, we can add, is *himself* silenced because he cannot utter a coherent statement, at 183b.

30. Gail Fine, "Knowledge and Logos in the *Theaetetus*," *Philosophical Review* 88 (1979): 384. Julia Annas, "Knowledge and Language: The *Theaetetus* and *Cratylus*," in *Language and Logos: Studies in Ancient Greek Philosophy Presented to G. E. L. Owen*, ed. Malcolm Schofield and Martha Craven Nussbaum (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 111. Burnyeat, *Plato's Theaetetus*, 143.

31. Burnyeat, *The "Theaetetus" of Plato*, 205. Plato, if he refuses to allow that "6" can be interchangeable with "four plus two," is said to be "perverse, even senseless" by Burnyeat.

32. Gilbert Ryle, "Letters and Syllables in Plato," *Philosophical Review* 69 (1960): 431.

33. Ryle, "Letters and Syllables in Plato," 434.

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